

Promoting Speaking Skills in an EFL Classroom through Project-based Learning:
A Way to Involve Learners in Participatory Classes

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ABSTRACT

This research project reports the results of a study that aimed at analyzing the influence of project-based learning (PBL) in the development of speaking skills in a group of EFL learners at a public school in Bogota. Students had difficulties with speaking because of limited vocabulary, poor knowledge and practice of language structures, and their restricted opportunities to be in contact with an English speaking environment inside and outside the classroom. This research study indicated that project-based learning applied to EFL contexts can be a meaningful learning experience for those learners lacking sufficient speaking skills, since projects allowed them to speak in English about their personal life, school problems, and the neighborhood where they live in Bogotá. These topics related to their own lives helped these students to use the English language for communicative purposes and to enhance communicative competence. Field-notes, transcripts of students' oral productions, and interviews were the main data related to how eighth graders increased their lexical competence, overcame fears of speaking in L2, became more goal-oriented and responsible, and were able to work cooperatively during the completion of three projects in a pedagogical intervention. This research study concluded that learners changed their negative perceptions about the English class, as English language projects motivated them to, become more active learners since they gradually got more used to practice the foreign language in oral form.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding."
Stephen Krashen

In the EFL classroom, students face different learning challenges, one being of main importance the improvement of the communicative competence. In general terms, communicative competence has been defined as the ability to understand and use language effectively and to send and receive messages in social contexts (Spitzberg, 1988). For many years, linguists and second/foreign language scholars have clarified and complemented this concept, all of which share a common thought: Communicative competence implies “knowledge about language” and “the ability and skill to activate that knowledge” to use it in communicative situations of real life (Bagaric, 2007). Developing communicative competence implies linguistic processes and socio-cultural dimensions, among other aspects, and it is developed through the constant practice of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), which are used during the normal process of communication in diverse contexts. Unfortunately, developing communicative competence in EFL education in Colombia is sometimes challenging and overrated due to the particular constraints and needs that learners have in the region, environment,

and even in the classroom where they learn the foreign language (Urrutia, W. & León, E, 2010). Aspects such the few, almost inexistent opportunities to use the foreign language outside the classroom, the limited number of classes assigned to the English subject per week, and students' socioeconomic background are crucial factors that influence on their English learning process.

This introduction serves as a starting point to present this study. As a researcher, I am aware that the development of communicative competence requires the appropriate use all its subcategories (grammatical competence, pragmatic competence, etc.) in an integrated way through the practice of the four communicative language skills. However, the focus of this study was to help a group of EFL students from Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School (VGPS) to improve their English language competence, emphasizing the development of the speaking skill.

Thus, this study describes an action research project that looked into how EFL learners were able to produce meaningful language orally through classroom projects by following the principles of project-based learning. The emphasis on the speaking skills represented an initial attempt for the learners to improve in some way their communicative ability, as they were encouraged to negotiate meaning in contexts that involved oral production with the support of reading, listening, and writing tasks. The interest in helping these students develop the speaking skill in the foreign language has several reasons that are particularly inherent to the setting and the participants involved in this research; and which I will address in the statement of the problem. Thus, this chapter includes a contextualization for the study, a needs analysis phase, the statement of the problem, and the research question.

1.1 Contextualization

The Ministry of Education in Colombia, through the Bilingualism Law 1651, created “Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo 2004–2019” in order to increase Colombian

students' communicative competence in English in all educational contexts. The goal is to prepare Colombian citizens to meet national and international competitiveness in the working, academic, and professional fields in tune with the ongoing process of globalization. In agreement with this law, the Secretaría de Educación del Distrito (SED) has recently generated Immersion Classrooms, which consist of having a native English speaker in the class, being in charge of doing dynamic and communicative activities for students to improve the English level at several schools. Despite this important effort, not all public schools have this program, so these institutions continue having many teaching obstacles to overcome. At the school where this study was conducted, Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School, there is lack of teaching materials, and the few ones available for the English area are old and not strictly appropriate for more authentic communicative purposes, as these materials help rather to develop grammatical aspects of the language than involving learners to speak in order to communicate. For example, the classrooms are not provided with audiovisual aids, the students do not have textbooks and dictionaries; and teachers can hardly supply learners with some worksheets and photocopies to work in class. Besides, students are not still conscious about the importance of the speaking skill in a foreign language, as it will be explained later in the statement of the problem. Because of these trials, the school and the English area is still called to incorporate appropriate teaching materials. It is needed to foster practices, and methodologies to learn the foreign language from a more interactive and communicative perspective.

In general, learners face different difficulties for developing oral skills. In fact, poor performance in speaking is not only a problem in Colombia, but in different EFL settings around

the world. Dincer (2012), Savaşçı (2014), Khan et al. (2010), and Yalçın et al (2014) report in their published research that learners in EFL environments often have low oral use of L2. For example, Dincer (2012) states that many English learners are not able to communicate orally because they create psychological barriers such as high classroom anxiety, inhibition, low motivation to participate, and low self-esteem at the moment they are asked to speak in English. For his part, Savaşçı (2014) analyzed a group of students' reluctance to speak in English because they were not often encouraged to adopt active oral speech in EFL classrooms. Likewise, Khan (2010) claims that it is quite difficult for some EFL students to transfer their knowledge from a language-learning situation to a language-using situation as they have limited or no opportunities to speak the foreign language at other places outside the classroom.

A similar problem with learners' oral production was identified short before this research study started back in 2015, when I first inquired why learners at different grades were reluctant speaking in English. It was detected that students at Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School (VGPS) were often disappointed because they noticed that they were not fluent; and they had a limited contact with the foreign language in the Colombian context. Students believed that it was difficult for them to speak English in the classroom, so they tended to leave the English learning behind. Up to the present time, listening, reading, and writing are commonly practiced in regular classes at VGPS, because the learners are more comfortable when they use these skills, than when they are required to speak. Therefore, the teachers talk most of the time in the English classes while students prefer to listen to and follow the teacher's instructions. Speaking usually tends to be the least practiced skill in EFL settings (Urrutia, W. & León, E, 2010). As part of my reflection as a teacher-researcher, I confess that I was not used to including speaking activities in

my classes as I unconsciously started to control the class with my speaking time and most of the time I gave students activities that did not imply oral language use.

However, considering the recent educational policies for Bilingualism (Ley 1651 de 2013); the Standards stated by the Ministry of Education (Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés); the Guidelines proposed by the Secretary of Education of Bogota, which include the development of speaking skill; the school mission, and my personal reflection about my teaching, and the speaking limitations my students had; I concluded that I needed to find teaching strategies to enhance speaking practices more often in my classes supported by systematic research.

Hence, this research constituted systematic inquiry that mainly attempted to strengthen learners' speaking skill with classroom projects. To accomplish this task, speaking development was facilitated through Project-based learning, as learners were involved in authentic language classroom projects. Thus, project-based learning was the teaching approach by which learners did oral tasks about their own lives and environment. Three main class projects were developed in a pedagogical intervention that supported this study, namely; 1) a personal life project in which students reflected critically about themselves, including aspects related to their personality, duties, lifestyles, and hopes and goals in life; 2) a school community project in which students were involved with other students to identify and deal with the problems of their school, and suggest possible solutions; and 3) a neighborhood project in which students did research about employment and jobs in their own community. All these projects attempted to promote speaking skill, as students were involved in personal and meaningful situations of their own life in such a way that they reflected, thinking critically about their own lives and the

context in which they lived. A more detailed description of the nature and purposes of these projects will be addressed in the instructional design, in chapter four.

1.2 Needs Analysis Phase

In order to define the problematic situation mentioned above, related to students' limitations with the speaking ability, and to detect this problem in my classroom based on reliable research, I started the inquiry in 2015 by first implementing a needs analysis phase, which allowed me to consider the problem to be addressed in this study. First, I found that students did not like speaking in the classroom because they were afraid and shy. In informal conversations, they confessed that they were afraid of the mockery of other classmates because they thought that they did not have enough vocabulary or structures to follow a fluent conversation or at least, to participate occasionally in class. Some students reported that speaking was rarely required in the class, so they practically did not use the foreign language orally because they were given reading and grammar activities for the most part. Some of them thought that learning English was not useful for their future lives; and others expressed sincerely that they did not like the English class at the school.

This initial informal comments from students about their rejection to speak in English, brought the necessity to design a formal survey (Appendix A. Diagnosis Survey), applied to students in 2015 in order to find documented causes why speaking generated so much distress and discomfort among learners. One important need detected in the survey was that they recognized that speaking in the classroom consisted only of questions asked by the teacher and short answers given by students. They thought that it would be better to practice English orally if they were involved in conversations about life experiences instead of just learning grammar rules and answering mechanically the teacher's questions. This involvement would probably take them

from being silent and reluctant to speak and participate in class and, accordingly, it would require a change in the teaching methodology.

This important suggestion from students made me reflect about my teaching experience in the different classes. I concluded that the speaking limitations and distress students had, needed to be approached and solved in this action research study. The needs analysis indicated that it would be important to promote the development of speaking skills so that they could improve their attitudes toward English and could become active participants in the use of the target language in the classroom. Therefore, I present the statement of the problem below, based on the findings in the needs analysis phase.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This research study responded to a puzzling situation observed at my workplace. Students from Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School had a limited use of English (L2) due to their restricted contact with an English speaking environment. This phenomenon was also enhanced by the teaching methodology they were instructed with. This is for the most a common situation in many EFL settings where learners use little or nothing the foreign language and where their only opportunity to use L2 is in the English classroom. It was identified that while students used to be exposed to grammar activities, reading, listening, and writing tasks (which they mostly practiced in the English class twice a week), speaking was the least practiced language skill due to several limitations. The first limitation was students' lack of vocabulary. They recognized that they were afraid of speaking and participating orally in the class because they did not know the words to express their ideas, and this situation caused feelings of fear, discomfort and shyness. This situation can be related to Tokoz-Goktepe's (2014) claim that students mostly experience problems when speaking in English because of personal factors, including: insufficient language

and content knowledge, limited contact with English outside the classroom, and the misdirected methods and materials used in the classroom.

Another problem detected in the class had to do with students' treatment to each other. Students preferred to work in pairs, but usually with their closer friends, and this situation led them to end up speaking in Spanish as they were used to in other contexts such as other classes in their native language, during the recess, and when doing extra academic activities. I also noticed that they often used aggressive or pejorative language when any of their partners made mistakes when speaking in class. They usually said offensive words such as "stupid, it is not the way to" ("imbécil, así no es") or "what a silly, you don't know" ("que bruto, no sabe,") comments that restricted learners to speak in class. Therefore, learners were scared of being mocked and ridiculed by their classmates. This unpleasant environment increased students' selfish and individualist attitudes to learn, since they neither helped each other nor shared their knowledge, and work. Because of that, I considered that one of the possibilities to stop these negative attitudes was to promote PBL.

The students' sense of selfishness and individuality in the group was increased by the methodology used in class, which essentially was based on grammar activities in which drilling, filling the gaps, and completing sentences were the main purpose. These grammar activities were done individually, and therefore did not provide authentic opportunities to use language communicatively. In this case, this study was an opportunity to change this traditional way of teaching English. Therefore, it was necessary to find other ways to promote more communicative activities in which speaking was the main goal, since communicative competence development implies the negotiation of meaning, rather than the learning of grammatical structures.

In short, VGPS mainly implemented a grammar-based learning rather than using the communicative approach. Grammar learning was complemented with some readings, listening tasks, and rarely writing production. Speaking was poorly practiced as students were only asked to answer the questions posted in the listening and reading tasks, but authentic oral interaction was generally omitted.

Indeed, the answers in the survey showed that learners had difficulties to speaking English because they were not taught to make oral productions, and they did not know how to express their ideas and because there were few or no opportunities to use the language orally. At the same time, they recognized that it would be good for them to improve this ability at school. (See appendix A. Diagnosis Survey). The students equally reported that they were afraid of making mistakes when they spoke in English, and that sometimes it was difficult for them to put sentences together to express their ideas because they had to think twice about how to organize the words. This difficulty created low levels of fluency and accuracy. For example, a boy named Fabian¹ commented: “No me gusta hablar en inglés porque no sé cómo pronunciar bien las palabras, siempre necesito un papelito para leer cuando estoy hablando”, and Camila said, “cuando tengo que decir algo en inglés, prefiero bajar el volumen de la voz para que no me escuchen bien, pues me da pena decir mal las palabras”. Moreover, students recognized that they did not feel satisfied with their process of learning English during their school life because in previous English courses speaking was not required in the classroom.

In order to change that situation, my research looked into encouraging speaking skill in EFL classroom, including pronunciation, meaning production, meaning negotiation, and correct use of language. Yoshida (2013) states that speaking the target language in the classroom

¹This is a pseudonym assigned to the student, since participants' real names and identity have been protected as part of the research protocol.

provides important opportunities for learning; especially when learners have little chance to use the target language outside the classroom. Boonkit (2010) and Savasçi (2014) coincide with Yoshida's ideas, when they claim that the majority of EFL students are reluctant or unable to speak English confidently and tend to behave much more unwillingly, especially for communication in more real situations of daily life. Such was the situation of the students involved in this study who were reluctant to speak due to lack of vocabulary, insecurity, their classmates' jokes and teasing, individualist attitudes to learn, and the fact they were not given the chance for language use. All these trials obviously reduced their interest in using the language orally.

The problems detected in the needs analysis phase ratifies Wang's idea (2014) that EFL learners have difficulty in speaking English fluently and accurately because of their speaking competence is influenced by cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors, aspects detected in the case of the participants involved in this study. Table 1. Shows students' answered to the question about the language skill more developed during their academic life. They recognized it is the less developed ability worked in the English class.

Table 1. *Student's answers to the question: "Which of the following skills you consider that has best developed in the English classes during their school life?"*

SKILL	# STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
writing	34	100%
reading	27	79%
listening	16	47%
speaking	7	20%

Due to these limitations, the research focus of this study was to observe and analyze how students' oral skill enhanced through project-based learning. The three classroom projects designed for this experience embraced speaking skills practice by encouraging learners to

conduct interviews, do fieldwork, prepare dialogues, and give oral presentations, in such a way that learners constructed meaning in the target language. Therefore, this research study was led by the following research question and objectives.

1.4 Research Question and Objectives

Table 2

Research Question and Objectives

RESEARCH QUESTION	OBJECTIVES
What role does project-based learning play in EFL learners' speaking skill development?	<p>To analyze how project-based learning influences EFL learners' speaking skills development.</p> <p>To identify the influence of cooperative learning on speaking skill development.</p>

1.5 Rationale

Learning a foreign language and being able to speak it is a difficult task. Although, the teacher tries to cultivate the four language skills on students during the learning/teaching process, there are many factors that make EFL communicative competence difficult to develop, especially at public schools. On the one hand, these complications are mainly related to the learners' environment, expectations, limitations, and potentialities. On the other hand, teaching practices need to be reoriented by adopting a more communicative perspective. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe in detail the way a group of EFL learners fostered the speaking ability, because it was one of the language skills less practiced in the educational context where this study was conducted. By promoting the development of speaking through class projects involving learners' own lives and context, learners were expected to learn the foreign language at

a public school in a more meaningful and communicative way, especially because there were no other available spaces than the English class for these learners to speak the foreign language. As Zhang, (2009), points out, the majority of students who study English as a foreign language (EFL) usually have limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom. Moreover, they have a limited exposure to native English speakers or members of the international community. This might be a reason for me as a teacher-researcher to provide more suitable situations and tasks for students to strengthen their speaking competence.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to enhance speaking by encouraging learners to develop projects in which they discussed relevant concerns about their own lives, their families, the school, and the neighborhood, and looked into how project-based learning influenced the development of this ability. Savignon (1983) argues that creating learning opportunities in the classroom helps to facilitate learning. Therefore, to develop speaking skill, it is appropriate to take into consideration learners' environment and needs such as the ones presented in the statement of the problem. If the learners are involved in the learning process, they will feel confident doing any task; and learning will flow naturally. Consequently, speaking will be easier and more meaningfully developed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This research project is concerned with fostering students' oral production in the EFL classroom from a public school in Bogota, through project-based learning, which was implemented in a pedagogical intervention as will be explained in chapter IV: instructional design. Accordingly, this study is theoretically supported by three constructs: communicative competence, speaking skill development in EFL, and project-based learning.

2.1 Communicative competence in language learning

In order to understand the importance of the speaking skill development in EFL, it is necessary to observe that speaking, as the practice of the other language skills (reading, listening, and writing) ultimately aims at enhancing learners' communicative competence. In general terms, communicative competence is associated with the ability to use the language correctly in order to accomplish communication goals effectively in situations of everyday life (Bachman, 1990). In fact, Savignon (1972, 1983) describes communicative competence as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting that is in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic of one or more interlocutors" (p. 8). Savignon (1983) defined communicative competence as "expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons or between one person and a written or oral text" (p. 10). For her, three

characteristics describe communicative competence: dynamism, applicability and context.

Communicative competence is dynamic because it is interpersonal and depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more people who share the same symbolic system.

Communicative competence is applicable to both, spoken and written language, and depends on a context in which communication takes place in an infinite variety of situations. Communicative competence is relative because it is not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of the participants.

The notion of communicative competence in language learning has been discussed and complemented by several scholars. Canale and Swain (1980) understand communicative competence as having three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. *Grammatical competence* covers knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and the mechanics of language such as word agreement, pronunciation, intonation and stress. *Sociolinguistic competence* entails the understanding of the social and cultural context and conventions in which communication takes place. *Strategic competence* deals with a speaker's ability to adapt the use of verbal and nonverbal language to compensate communication problems caused by the speaker's lack of understanding, proper grammar use or insufficient knowledge of social behavioral and communication norms. Failures in communication such as lack of vocabulary, shyness, or, anxiety may be overcome using tools like paraphrasing, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, guessing as well as shifts in register and style. This concept is related to what Cohen (1996) defines as "social strategies" which include the actions that learners choose to interact with other learners and with native speakers (e.g., asking questions for clarification and cooperating with others).

Canale redefined the model of communicative competence in 1983 by adding a fourth component called *Discourse competence*. He described it as the mastery of rules that determine ways in which forms and meanings are combined to achieve a meaningful unity of spoken or written texts. This component involves aspects as cohesion and coherence of sentences. According to him, cohesion is achieved by the use of grammatical devices such as: pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel structures etc. These strategies help to link individual sentences to a whole unit of meaning. Achieving coherence, implies facilitating the organization of meaning, and the establishment of logical relationships between groups of sentences. For instance, actions like repetition, progression, regularity, and relevance of ideas provide coherence to the language unit.

Similarly, Bachman (1990) defines communicative competence as the “ability to use language for the purpose of achieving a particular communicative goal in a specific situational context of communication” (p. 84). He classified this competence into organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The first competence involves the ability to recognize and control the formal structure of the language (grammar rules) while the second, the pragmatic competence, brings to mind using the language appropriately to achieve certain functions in certain contexts. Thus, the desired result of the language learning process should be the ability to communicate appropriately, not the ability to use the language exactly as a native speaker does. The notion of communicative competence as conceived by Bachman (1990) is useful for this study because: 1) instead of teaching grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in isolation, the goal of language teaching is communication and meaning negotiation which can only be possible with the enhancement of the four language skills including speaking through the use of classroom projects, 2) speaking practice is one of the most direct ways to enhance

communication and 3) project-based learning necessarily encourages learners to use the language as a system of the expression of meaning and therefore the development of all the components of communicative competence. Savignon (1983) says: “better communication means better understanding of ourselves and others; less isolation from those around us; and more productive, happy lives” (p.10). Additional features to understand Savignon’s (1983, p. 28) concept of communicative competence in second/foreign language teaching are: 1) Language use is creative. It means learners use whatever knowledge they have of a language system to express their meaning in an infinitive variety of ways. 2) Language depends on the roles of the participants, the situation, and the goal of the interaction. 3) L2 learning, like L1 learning, begins with the needs and interests of the learner. 4) Production should begin with the conveyance of meaning. 5) The teacher assumes a variety of roles to permit learner participation in a wide range of communicative situations. The features above explained support this study in the way participants become more autonomous when they interact; as well as learners are able to build knowledge and use the language to talk about their own needs and interests.

2.2 Speaking skill theory on production and interaction in EFL

If communicative competence is the desired goal of language teaching, and language learning implies communication, students are expected to interact in the EFL classroom through the constant and fair practice of the four communicative skills. Although this research study recognizes the equal importance of the four communicative language skills to engage the learners in meaningful and authentic language use, rather than the mechanical practice of language forms, speaking development was the focus of inquiry in this research based on the statement of the problem described in chapter one.

Speaking is a human and an interactive process through which people construct meaningful expressions that involve producing, receiving, and processing information orally (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. Speaking requires learners to not only know how to produce simultaneously specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also to understand when, why, and what is needed to produce language (sociolinguistic competence) (Cohen, 1996). Lynne (2001) affirms that:

“(...) to speak in the FL in order to share understandings with other people requires attention to precise details of the language. A speaker needs to find the most appropriate words and the correct grammar to convey meaning accurately and precisely, and needs to organize the discourse so that a listener will understand” (p. 41).

Thus, the development of speaking skill during the teaching/learning process is an interesting, but complex topic to understand. Addressing a theoretical background of the speaking production requires to take into account the position speaking has in regards to the other language skills (listening, reading, and writing), and to analyze it in relation to the goals of communicative competence. To do so, it is a must to draw upon the theories provided by Jeremy Harmer (2001) about the practice of English teaching, Martin Bygate’s (1987) views of speaking, and other recognized authors on the field.

Bygate (1987) indicates that in order to achieve communicative goals through speaking, two aspects come into play: the knowledge of the language and skill in using this knowledge. In other words, the process of interaction requires understanding how the language works, its

components and functions; and how and when to speak adequately in specific situation of life.

Bygate claims:

“We do not merely know how to assemble sentences in the abstract: we have to produce them and adapt to the circumstances. This means making decisions rapidly, implementing them smoothly, and adjusting our conversation as unexpected problems appear in our path” (p. 3).

Bygate refers to two components that are present during the process of oral interaction:

production skills and interaction skills. Production skills, as the name suggests, deal with those devices that help speakers to make oral productions through “facilitation” and “compensation.”

On the one hand, facilitation is understood as strategies that students use to increase their oral productions, including simplification (connecting sentences with conjunctions “and”, “but” or avoid using complex sentences); ellipsis (the omission of part of sentences); formulaic expressions (the use of expressions and phrases that have normal meaning and tend to go together); time creating devices (give more time in order to formulate what to say); and fillers, hesitation, and repetition. (E. g. “erm”, “you see”, “kind of” etc.). On the other hand, compensation is related to modifying what the speaker has already said. This includes tools such as self-correction, false starts, substitution, rephrasing, reformulating, and repetition and hesitation (p. 20-21).

It is true that in the case of English, spelling and pronunciation do not always coincide, so these features of facilitation and compensation, in the teaching/learning process help students to come up with oral production and compensate the problems they may face in order to sound more naturally and accurately as speakers of a foreign language. That is why it is important for language teachers to create speaking activities in which learners can be involved in facilitation

and compensation practices, as it may happen with the integration of projects as this research study proposes.

Likewise, Bygate (1987) suggests that learners need to develop two social skills at the moment of speaking. The first one is interaction, which implies knowing when and how to talk, how to invite someone else to speak, when and how to finish a conversation, and so on. It involves normal routines or typical patterns of conversation including patterns such as greeting, asking for names, age, jobs, among others. The second skill, the negotiation of meaning, refers to the capacity to understand and produce meaning to fulfill a communicative goal (p. 30). Pattison (1987) claims that in a communicative environment, speakers need to express their own ideas by being aware of what they are saying and having a reason for communication because authentic speaking implies to achieve communicative aims, and solve problems or tasks of real life. According to Ellis's views of speaking (1990), interaction in the language classroom should be meaning-focused and carried out to facilitate the exchange of information, trying to reach "... exchanges involving authentic communication" (Ellis, 1990, p.12). In addition, Lynne (2001) affirms that for information exchange, a speaker needs to find the most appropriate words, correct grammar to convey meaning accurately and precisely, and organize the discourse so that a listener can understand.

For his part, Richards (2006) discusses the concept of speaking as classroom interaction based on Brown and Yule (1983) who previously proposed two speaking functions: interactional functions and transactional functions. Thus, Richard refines their names by referring to talk as interaction and talk as transaction, and adds one more which he calls talk as performance. The first one, talk as interaction, relates to the function of language to establish good social relations such as greeting, taking respectful turns to speak, establishing eye-contact, and paying attention to the

topic of conversation. This interactional function in speaking skill's development can be related to Bygate's (1987) idea of management of interaction and turn taking. According to Bygate, negotiation assumes that during interaction, processing and reciprocity conditions cooperate when harmonious relationships are established between the interlocutors. Thus, these construct of talk as interaction was useful for this study because learners were provided with communicative environments and classroom projects through which they could improve their interactional skills in English (respecting others' turns to speak, paying attention to those who are speaking, never interrupt, and be kind) as important aspect to establish good relationships while completing the tasks for the projects.

The second function of oral language, talk as transaction, focuses on the exchange of important information that one or some of the speakers did not know or knew partially about a given topic, issue or event. The third function, talk as performance, mainly refers to public talk when the speaker transmits information before an audience, such as classroom presentations, debates, and speeches. This research study took into special consideration the transactional function of oral language as students had to exchange important information about the topics they investigated to complete the projects on their own lives, their school, and their community. It also took into account the function of language as performance because students had to give oral reports to their classmates when each project was concluded.

Another significant issue to take into account when helping EFL learners' speaking skills is fluency. Harmer (2001) affirms that to speak fluently, the speaker not only needs "knowledge of language features" but also the "ability to process information and language on the spot." It means "mental/social processing" (p. 269). From Harmer's point of view, the ability to wage oral communication depends on the participant's knowledge of language features and the ability to

process information and language on the setting. For this author, four areas are implied in the development of communicative competence to achieve better levels of fluency: connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation of meaning. Connected speech refers to the ability to produce phonemes, words, sentences, and discourse at a normal speed, by using strategies of assimilation, elision, linking, and stress patterning. Expressive devices are related to the use of emotions and intensity to the sounds, words, and sentences. Lexis and grammar suggest the correct use of phrases or expressions useful to accomplish communication. Negotiating of meaning, as it has previously explained, involves strategies for understanding and exchanging information to fulfill a communicative purpose. One possible way to help EFL students gradually develop all these fluency features is to actually encourage them to produce oral language on the spot through communicative language tasks involving exchange information, regardless the challenge those tasks can imply, as it happened with the projects designed for the pedagogical intervention that supported this research study.

Bygate (1987) and Harmer (2001) also explain that oral production in language learning involves mental/social processing (speakers need to process and put ideas in a coherent and comprehensible way), interacting with others (involve more participants), and information processing (responding to others' messages and feelings). In short, both Bygate and Harmer agree that for a speaker, in order to be able to wage a successful fluent oral production, it is necessary to possess knowledge of the language and skills in using his/her knowledge. Their approach involves elements to be considered during language teaching. Being conscious of elements such as production skills and interaction skills, language features, and mental/social processes may help the English teacher to find ways and teaching procedures to improve the development of learners' speaking skills in a communicative EFL learning environment.

Although the importance of fluency in speaking was already addressed in the previous paragraphs, and based on my research on speaking theories in language teaching, I consider that fluency needs to be discussed with the issue of accuracy, since there are constant debates whether fluency or accuracy, or maybe both aspects should be central in the communicative language classroom. Speaking accurately takes into account the extent to which the language that is produced conforms to target language norms or grammar rules (Yuan & Ellis, 2003, p. 2) It involves the correct use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Speaking fluently refers to the ability to produce the spoken language “without undue pausing or hesitation” (Skehan, 1996, p. 22) while accuracy refers to the condition of being exact and correct with the use of grammar forms.

Wang (2007) affirms that speaking occurs spontaneously and transiently in real time, so producing spoken language can be very time-constrained because of fluency and accuracy matters. He recognizes for example, that the influence of cognitive factors, linguistic factors, and affective factors challenge EFL learners to speak English fluently and accurately in English, and that learning how to speak a second or foreign language is one of the most difficult abilities to develop during the learning process.

According to Littlewood (1981), language learners must manipulate the linguistic and communicative system; it means that their purpose is to use this system in a spontaneous and flexible way in order to express their intended message with appropriate levels of accuracy and fluency. There are two useful concepts exposed by Littlewood that go perfectly with this study. First, the learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations in the real world. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language. Second, the

learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms, that is the context and social convention in which the language is orally produced based on appropriate fluency and accuracy.

However, it is a fact in language learning that many learners might develop correct fluency, but may have problems with accuracy or vice versa. Although there is no consensus among English teachers about which feature should be predominant in the communicative language classroom, whether fluency or accuracy, it was my purpose as an English teacher at a public school in Bogotá to motivate a group of EFL learners to develop speaking skills. It implies the acquisition of rules to build sentences and the decisions that participants have to make about communication, because it means a face to face relation with feedback in real time (Bygate, 1998). Consequently, learners used the foreign language more often and became more fluent to reach communicative purposes (develop communicative competence), despite the fact that there were many moments in which they had problems with accuracy. However, accuracy was also enhanced through the projects.

2.3 Project-based learning (PBL)

Project-based learning (PBL) is a teaching method that was not directly designed for language learning. It is rather a wider method, implemented in all areas of knowledge and subjects, including, science, math, the arts, and social studies. Therefore, this research study proposes the incorporation of PBL in Colombian EFL education, since it is a relatively new research topic in language learning. Although there is published research on the use of PBL in many areas of knowledge, research on its implementation in EFL education has been scarce (Beckett, 2005; 2006) as it has happened in Colombia.

PBL is an instructional flexible method centered on the learner and based on the constructivist approach that entails “social experience” and involves group work. It gives advantage to self-awareness of learning (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). The educational technology professor Grant (2002) states that PBL “challenges students to develop the ability to think critically, analyze problems, and find and use appropriate learning resources” (p.4). It engages students to construct knowledge and use skills through inquiry processes oriented by authentic questions in order to complete a series of steps of a task of real life. Hence it may be a time consuming process. Kolodner et al. (2003) points out that the creation of projects in a classroom generates a culture of collaboration with which students feel responsible for helping each other. Ronald et. al. (1994) state an idea which fits perfectly with the purpose of this study, they define project-based instruction as that method that often has a

“driving question including meaningful content that is anchored in a real-world problem; investigations and artifacts that allow students to learn concepts, apply information, and represent knowledge in a variety of ways; collaboration among students, teachers, and others in the community so that participants can learn from one another; and use of cognitive tools that help learners represent ideas...” (p. 518)

Thomas (2000) explains that PBL requires “complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations” (p. 1). In this order of ideas, any topic could be possible; the weather, the environment, the neighborhood, the school, etc. The important aspect to take into account is to choose topics related to learners’ daily life and the environment that could engage them in integrating learning and experience. Through

the construction of a personally meaningful artifact, which may be a play or a multimedia presentation or a poem, learners present the contents they have learned (Harel & Papert, 1991; Kafai & Resnick, 1996 cited in Tamim et al, 2013); and this was what really happened doing this research. Students talked about their school and neighborhood. In addition, other scholars have found that through PBL, learners can be more autonomous over the topics they learn as it is possible to maintaining learners' interest and motivation to take more responsibility for their learning (Tassinari, 1996; Wolk, 1994; Worthy, 2000). As a result, with more autonomy, learners "shape their projects to fit their own interests and abilities" (Moursund, 1998, p. 4) and they are able to set purposes for the way they would like to learn.

2.3.1 Theory of language for PBL

Taking into account that PBL is a wider teaching method that was not strictly designed for language learning, I argue that according to the general characteristics of this instructional method, it matches the methodological principles of communicative language teaching and shares similarities with the techniques and procedures with some language teaching methods such as communicative approach, task-based approach, and skill-based approach. Therefore, I argue hereafter how PBL can be understood from communicative language trends and why it should be incorporated in language teaching:

Learning a language is different from learning anything else. In PBL language is conceived as a vehicle for making meaning and for communication. Larsson (2001) affirms: "when learning a language, understanding is of course paramount." (p. 5). Thus, communicative skills and social interaction skills can be improved when learners are requested to work on projects. Larsson (2001) took ideas from other researchers to build his concept of PBL. For example, he says that thanks to PBL, it is possible to introduce problems to motivate and initiate

student to learn by doing and completing communicative tasks actively. It means that students actively investigate about and solve real-world problems and challenges, and acquire a deeper knowledge of contents that require meaning negotiation and communication. Students are expected to learn with the completion of projects by means of constructing their own knowledge (Duc, 1996 cited in Larsson, 2001: pp. 2). Thus, throughout PBL, learners need to use language to obtain and communicate information and to express and share opinions about a given problem or topic. They learn to listen to, speak, read, and write about real topics of the world more effectively, such as school, social, and cultural topics of their own surrounding. Since communication is the basis to complete projects in group, learners can develop abilities to read and write document, hold discussions and debates, make decisions in group, consult reference materials, talk or interview different people, and, report findings. Through these communicative forms, EFL learners can build vocabulary, learn and improve the use grammar rules and conventions of social language use during actual conversations. In short, EFL learners can construct an understanding of language for communicative purposes, as it is used in real-world contexts (Abdullah, 1998). Summing up, learners have the chance to explore learning using their previous knowledge to build a new one knowledge integrating what is happening around themselves; all of this having the second language as an excuse for learning.

2. 3. 2 Theory of learning in PBL.

PBL is supported on Dewey's (1940) proposals of "learning by doing." This author argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes. He believes that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum as they take part in their own learning. Individuals construct knowledge through social interaction with other people in their environment, and each individual's knowledge construction

is different. So, through projects, investigative work, individuals are able to construct new knowledge or enrich their current knowledge, including the knowledge of another language, like is the case of the pedagogical implementation of this research in which students learned about their classmates, the problems of the school, and the needs of their neighborhood as they completed the projects in the target language.

Authors such as Harel & Papert (1991) and Kafai & Resnick (1996) (cited in Tamim et al, 2013) state that “individuals learn best when they are constructing an artifact that can be shared with others and reflected upon, such as plays, poems, pie charts or toothpick bridges” (p.83). These artifacts must be personally meaningful, with which individuals are most likely to become engaged in learning. As PBL is a student-centered method, it strives for “considerable individualization of curriculum, instruction and assessment” (90); in other words, PBL takes into consideration that each learner has his/her own rate of learning, and produces his/her own knowledge according to his/her own capacities (Moursund, 1998, p. 4. cited in Tamim et al, 2013).

Thomas (2000) sets five principles for PBL application to any area or subject, which are directed to the idea of learning by doing: 1) projects should be central to the curriculum, 2) projects should focused on problems that drive the students to struggle with major concepts; e.g. community problems; 3) projects involve the students in a constructive investigation, 4) projects are large processes which is student-driven, where students are more engaged and motivated; and 5) projects must be realistic, requesting students to investigate and learn about the problems or events of the real world. Furthermore, Grant (2002) discusses some features of PBL which embrace the ideals of learning by doing: tasks, investigation, provision of resources, scaffolding, collaboration, and opportunities for reflection on the topic worked or on the work made. A

project must be developed following some logical steps, each step narrows to a general question, and student must look for the resources needed to complete the project. This process is made collaboratively and, at the end, it is possible to evaluate the work done. All the above features can be incorporated in EFL classrooms, instead of holding teacher-centered classes or grammar-based classes.

As an instructional model, PBL has several benefits in the learning process. For example, Wolk (1994) describes PBL as an “outlet for every student to experience success” (p. 44) as a result of its potential to foster intrinsic motivation, and develop a range of abilities and skills. Students can gain knowledge such as how to work cooperatively and how to make projects in a variety of domains. Consulting and written tasks. In addition, learners, as doers, can explore and inquire a topic that calls their attention, while they develop feelings such as self-esteem and confidence (Katz & Chard, 1992).

2.3.3 Types of learning projects in PBL

When EFL learners are engaged in project-based learning (PBL), they work in small groups and are challenged to solve problems that are authentic (McGrath, 2003). Doing that, students built knowledge and understanding through inquiry learning activities and meaningful tasks. Projects should have different types of steps or tasks, framed within four main components: (1) an extended period; (2) collaboration; (3) inquiry or investigation, and (4) the construction of an artifact or performance of a consequential task (Mc Grath, 2013, p. 5). Among the types of projects one could mention Challenge-Based Learning; Place-Based Education; and Activity-Based Learning. Challenge-Based learning encourages students to leverage the technology they use in their daily lives. Place-Based Education, are projects performed in local

communities. Activity-Based Learning requests students to construct their own meaning through hands-on activities, often with handy materials and opportunities to experiment.

In the case of this research study, place-based education projects were developed as the central topic of the three projects were related to topics of their own community and personal lives. Activities students can make during this kind of work are debates, designing plans, doing fieldwork (observations, interviews, surveys, life stories) completing steps, which most of the time demands data collections. Stoller (2006), states that through project-based, students develop content and language learning and, at the same time, students “demonstrate increased self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning” (p. 27). Through her research, she analyzed how students worked on some topics (Native-American communities, astronomy and space, getting to know students’ home town, the library vs. Web sources, etc.) and with artifacts that helped a group of EFL students to learn. The final product these learners submitted was a poster, and gave an oral presentation on the topic they had investigated. Stoller’s (2006) ideas helped me to plan the projects for this study.

2.3.4 Teacher’s role in PBL

In PBL, the teacher has an active role. He/she becomes a “guide,” an “advisor,” or a “coordinator” to the group (Levy, 1997, and Papandreou, 1994 cited in Korosidou, 2013). The educator must plan PBL content and sequence of projects and tasks, provide immediate feedback on students’ work and discussion, and evaluate students rather than only provide them with work and information. When conducting project-based learning, the teacher walks around the classroom to answer students’ questions about the project, and encourages students to work. Sometimes, teachers often find themselves in the role of learners and peer with the students.

Lessons for Project-based learning require more preparation than regular planning time for other classes. It begins with an idea or a question. In the case of this study, for instance, I provided the students with three main ideas to complete the projects: In the first project, students recognized themselves and other classmates they hardly spoke to. In the second project, students did investigative work on their school and its problems. In the third project, they did fieldwork in the neighborhood close to school to learn more about their community.

The teacher is also responsible for providing students with materials and sources to develop the project, including videos, readings, worksheets, etc. The materials used for this research study will be described in chapter IV.

2.3.5 Student's role in PBL

In the traditional learning model, students work individually most of the time. In PBL, although students work individually sometimes, they improve their abilities to mostly work in pairs or in small groups. Just as teachers, student's role in PBL becomes more active. When conducting a project, students face new "forms of knowledge representation." they have to "expand" mechanisms of collaboration and communication, and they need to find support for reflection and authentic assessment (Bass, 2008). Accordingly, learners become problem solvers by completing several phases in most projects, which include selecting a topic, making plans, researching, developing products, and sharing results with others (Wrigley, 1998; Korkmaz & Kaptan, 2000). After choosing the topic, students make plan for the project to work on by assigning tasks and roles, so they develop a strong sense of responsibility because they have to complete the task for the wellbeing of the group. During the researching and developing phases the learners become explorers and investigators, trying to answer questions related to the topic and selecting, organizing the information, and synthesizing the findings. To share information

with others, they make decisions on the key points and concepts of the project they believe are important to be reported. So they, finally report the findings, answer questions from the audience, and receive feedback to their classmates.

I personally believe that with projects, students have the opportunity to defeat their fear of speaking, to practice speaking more often, and develop language competence. During the pedagogical intervention Wrigley's (1998) phases and Korkmaz & Kaptan (2000) project-based steps were applied.

As stated in this chapter, learning a second language is evident when learners can express their ideas using their speaking skill properly. It is to develop fluency and accuracy at the same time that knowing the context from the L2 without forgetting their native language. It means understanding and valuing the differences.

These theoretical considerations about PBL and its characteristics can be implemented in EFL, since they are helpful to promote oral production; which is one of the most challenging skills to develop in EFL context. Chapter IV presents a pedagogical intervention that shows how PBL was integrated in an English class.

2.4 State of the art

I have previously said that published research on PBL in EFL/second language teaching is almost inexistent, as explained by Beckett (2005; 2006). There are more theoretical perspectives on how to implement PBL, but empirical research is still limited. This fact, indicates that research of the application of PBL in EFL settings still needs to be conducted and published. In this sense, I include in this section research on PBL that was carried out in other educational fields in order to have a panoramic view of how this instructional method has been used. Several studies have examined the effect of PBL on learning outcomes. For example,

Noe and Neo (2009), researchers in the area of multimedia learning report a study in which students enhanced their interest, critical thinking abilities, presentation skills, communication skills, and their ability to work effectively on a team when they worked on a PBL. Also, Grant and Branch (2005) report that students manipulating artifacts, research papers, and exhibiting final products were able to move from novices to experts in the domain of knowledge, and that they blended some of their learning abilities in the production of the artifacts that were needed to complete the projects.

In addition, Hernandez-Ramos and Pas (2009), teachers in the area of history indicate that students learning through PBL did not limit themselves to reporting facts, but attempted to interpret the information they found, were more motivated to work collaboratively on their final presentations, and expressed a more positive attitude towards learning history. From teachers' point of view about the use of PBL, Ravitz (2008), an educator in technology stated that the strongest reasons to implement PBL was that learning was more personalized and more varied, as well as teaching technology through academic content was more effectively.

Research related to speaking skill development shows that several teachers-researchers have inquired the development of speaking skills through project-based learning. Khan, Nadeem & Ali, Arshad (2010) in their research called "Improving the speaking ability in English: The students' perspective" found out that the teacher can facilitate language acquisition through problem solving activities and tasks which ensure learner participation and interaction, Additionally, it is the teacher who helps students to correct mistakes and helps students establish differences between English and their native language. These researchers selected 20 male students and 20 female students from four government colleges of Pakistan. Data about how learners see their speaking learning was collected through a questionnaire and was tabulated in

the form of counting frequencies and then analyzed through percentages. They found that time class was not enough for the improvement of speaking ability; and that some of the students could not speak in the English classrooms because they were afraid of their teachers and of their classmates who would laugh at them. The researchers recommend that when teaching English, it is needed to provide motivation, encouragement, psychological training, reassurance, and counseling to help learners remove their shyness when being asked to speak in English.

Bonkit (2010) conducted a research study named “Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English” with 18 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Arts at Silpakorn University, Thailand. Participants enrolled in an elective English course entitled, ‘Listening and Speaking for Special Communication.’ The study focused on examining how participants could increase their confidence and competence when practicing speaking. The instruments employed were personal interviews and speaking performance recordings, which helped to determine which were the participants’ attitudes toward speaking. Data was collected during 15 weeks, in which it was observed that students’ lack of confidence in oral production impeded them to produce oral speech and to speak English when they knew they were going to interact with international speakers. It was also found that the learners were weak at pronunciation and grammatical structures. However, the teaching method implemented, task-based approach, was an effective strategy to help minimize anxiety and maximize confidence. Participants gradually felt comfortable and motivated to speak. In addition, feedback and comments from participants and the instructor played an important role to create awareness of the need to improve their speaking skill.

Savaşçı (2014) reports an action research study named “Why are some students reluctant to use L2 in EFL speaking classes?” conducted in Turkey. The study states at the beginning that

according to many English teachers and students, one possible common reason causing high school Turkish learners' speaking limitations seemed to be due to the fact that EFL education has mainly emphasized the study of grammar. Savaşçı (2014) claims that students do not adopt active speech roles in the classroom. So, she wanted to confirm with data if the problem relied on the lack of grammar knowledge. She conducted her research with 22 young advanced English students, aged between 18 and 25, 17 females and 5 males. A 15-item informal Likert-scale questionnaire was created as instrument to gather information about students' attitudes towards speaking. Following the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was applied. The participants were interviewed by the researcher face to face. The sessions were recorded and transcribed. The results showed that participants' reluctance to speak in English did not seem to be related to their lack of knowledge of vocabulary or grammar as it was believed. The problem relied on the fact that students were not offered topics of interest to speak in class. Students said that if topics were more interesting, they would be eager to speak and participate more in class discussions.

The purpose of Tokoz-Goktepe's study (2010) "Speaking problems of 9th grade high school Turkish learners of L2 English and possible reasons for those problems: Exploring the teachers and students' perspectives" was conducted with four ninth grade high school English teachers, two males and two females; and 120 15-16-year-old EFL students enrolled in a public school. Data collection involved a questionnaire for teachers and students, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. Tokoz-Goktepe found that students mostly experienced problems in speaking English because of personal factors, including insufficient language use and content knowledge, limited contact with English outside the classroom, and the misdirected methods and materials used in the classroom. From students' perspective, they recognized that they had a limited amount of vocabulary, they tried to speak a few times in class, and they

usually switched back to the first language. They said that they were afraid of making mistakes, and finally, they were not confident for speaking in English. From the teachers' perspective, they reported that students could not speak English due to problems derived from limited vocabulary, anxiety, poor pronunciation, insufficient knowledge about the topics discussed, peer pressure, uninteresting topics, and lack of motivation. Teachers thought that maybe students were just interested in passing marks. They could not be motivated to use English because of the absence of any opportunities to practice it outside the classroom.

In his article "The influence of learning strategies on oral presentations: A comparison between group and individual performance," Chou (2011), a researcher from Taiwan, investigated the use and influence of learning strategies in cooperative and individual learning, and the benefits of cooperative learning in improving students' English speaking ability. Fifty-two, third-year French major college students, taking the Professional English Course at a college in Taiwan, participated in the study. The students were required to read articles extensively, undertake small-scale research based on the themes in the course book, and give presentations related to the topics. Research methods included observation, think-aloud tasks, structured interviews, and questionnaires. Data collection on students' performance in oral presentations consisted of two stages. In the first stage, the students gave presentations in groups. In the second stage, the same participants gave two presentations individually (speak for six to seven minutes). After the two presentations, they completed a questionnaire. In individual presentations, metacognitive strategies were used. The data showed that the participants needed to go through the process of collecting and preparing materials no matter what type of presentation was used. Students used gestures, new words, synonyms, unfinished message, and

the use of L1. Rehearsal strategies were more common in group presentations. Cooperative learning activities enhanced their motivation for learning and speaking more frequently.

Massoud & Faezeh (2010) report their research in the article “The impact of task structure and planning conditions on oral performance of EFL learners.” These researchers explored the effects of cooperative learning on EFL learners’ language learning when learners engage in performing the task under two conditions of planned vs. unplanned. Participants of the study were 64 language learners, 27 males and 37 females, who studied English at a Language Institute in Tabriz, Iran, and were junior high school learners. They were aged between 14 and 50; and, they were randomly selected. The authors found out that cooperative learning helped significantly to enhance learners’ oral communicative competence and their motivation towards learning English.

In Colombia, on the one hand, Parga’s (2010) research reported how cooperative learning strategies could be useful when students face problems of interpersonal communication, such as conflict derived largely from gossiping, information distortion, and verbal aggressiveness in a public school in Bogota city. This study was carried out with thirty students of eighth grade. For the data collection stage, Parga video and audio recorded students’ verbal behaviors. Besides, he took field notes. He implemented a plan, which included technique activities for the development of oral skills like Heads Together, Jigsaw, Inside-Outside Circle, and Cooperative Odd One Out amount others through which learners addressed their interpersonal conflicts. Findings indicated that cooperative learning strategies and negotiation were more constructive and fruitful when there was a difficult environment infested by conflictive relations. Under a correct orientation, “students’ original negative influence over their peers turned into positive mediation” (p. 30),

Cooperative learning development facilitated peer revision, peer correction, and peer feedback, and reinforced the concept that learning is a social construction.

Another research study called “Improving Eleventh Graders’ Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative Learning Strategies” conducted by Prieto (2007) aimed to establish strategies that helped students to improve their English oral production in a private school. The instruments used to collect the data were field notes, students’ and teachers’ surveys, students’ interviews, and audiotapes recordings. She discovered that cooperative learning facilitated improvement in oral production and gave students the opportunity to help each other and to learn from their partners. In a few words, cooperative learning strategies provided better behaviors from students in the English class.

This chapter had presented the theoretical constructs and the state of the art that supported this research study. It has pointed out that PBL could be an ideal method in language teaching that could help EFL learners to improve oral production, and in extent, their communicative competence. PBL is a socio-constructivist method that advocates oral communication, social interaction, cooperative learning, and meaning negotiation while learners solve problems and investigate topics of real life. All these characteristics fit well with communicative speaking practices in the EFL classroom.

Chapter 3

Research Design

“I want schools to be able to ensure that virtually all students are confident, joyful, self-aware, and caring learners. I want to help create schools in which children are active, happy, and productive, in which every child has a high level of basic skills and knowledge as well as strategies and predispositions for solving problem, creativity and self-expression. I want to help schools to create conditions in which students will know a great deal...” (Slavin, 1995)

This chapter presents the research methodology that supported this study. It includes the research paradigm, the research approach, and the research type. It also describes the setting, the participants, and the researcher’s role. Last, it explains the data collection instruments that were used during the pedagogical intervention. It is essential to clarify that this research methodology highly depended on a pedagogical intervention in which students were engaged in the completion of three projects in order to improve their speaking production. During the pedagogical intervention, which will be described in chapter IV (Instructional Design), data were collected. The process of data collection was supported by the following research principles and procedure:

3.1 Research Paradigm

For this study, I adopted a socially constructed paradigm. I attempted to examine EFL eight graders’ participation in the construction of knowledge based on their own perceived and close reality. That is to say, through the completion of three projects in a pedagogical intervention, learners were able to see and learn about their close surroundings and reality and

express their opinions in the target language about personal, familiar, social, economic, and communal issues that took place in their lives, homes, school, and the neighborhood. This research project was supported by Creswell's (2003) and Lincoln's and Guba's (2000) ideas about how individuals make understanding of the world they live in and work. In these conditions, learners, individuals, or groups generate subjective meaning of their own experiences and construct the meaning of a situation in interaction with other people (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). In this respect, I considered suitable to take into account students' environment (home, the classroom, the school, and the neighborhood) as ideal settings from which students were able to discuss issues, problems, and achievements they identified, recognized, and valued in those sites. In this sense, students were involved in a more personal and meaningful learning process as they made understanding of their own lives and reality.

3.2 Research Approach

This study fits the characteristics of qualitative research. Creswell (2003) sees qualitative research as an interdisciplinary method of applied inquiry used to understand in depth, why and how some particular behaviors happen. Merriam (2009) asserts qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; or how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (p. 13). As a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative research study, I tried to interpret and describe under theoretical and experiential lenses participants' behaviors, actions, and oral productions that allowed them to enhance speaking skill and construct meaning in the target language when they designed and developed projects, framed within methodologies of PBL. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research involves taking into account the setting. It means taking into consideration, employing,

and taking advantage of actions and events that happen in the classroom, including students' context, worries, and interests. Those particular conditions are useful in the EFL setting.

This research is also qualitative because it is supported by inductive procedures to analyze data, coming from careful observation of the phenomenon under investigation. In this particular case, the topic under examination was how eight graders' oral productions could be possibly enhanced through project-based learning. Lincoln and Guba (2006) claimed that "qualitative research focus on building relations with participants, taking stances, and enabling and promoting justice and that work could be judged accordingly" (p. 410). This process helps learners to improve their learning.

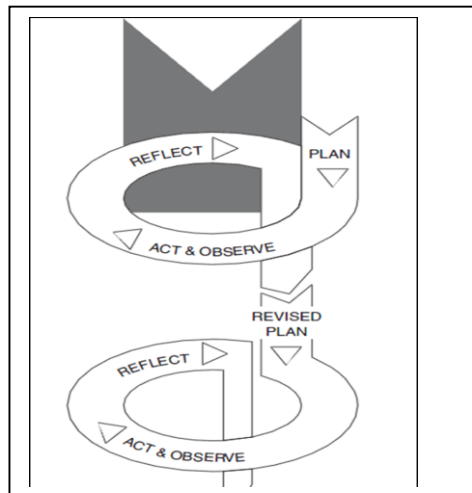
3.3 Research type

Action research is the basis of this inquiry. In a broad sense, the term action research was coined in the 1940s by the German-American social psychologist Kurt Lewin. He described action research as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action" that uses "a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action" (1946). Meyer (2000) calls action research the process that involves people and social situations that have the ultimate aim of changing an existing situation for the better. Waterman et al. (2001) provide a definition that fits perfectly with this study. They define action research as "a period of inquiry, which describes, interprets and explains social situations while executing a change of intervention aimed at improvement and involvement." (p. 4). For Reason and Bradbury (2008) action research involves, empower, and improve participants' in social world. They state a list of features which include: practices that respond to people's desire to act creatively in the face of practical issues in their lives; the engagement with people in collaborative relationships; and, the

value oriented, seeking to address issues of significance of human persons, their communities in which we participate.

While the previous definitions refer to action research in a broad sense, which is applied to social problems and issues, in the field of education, it embraces particularly the actions needed to solve a given problem in the classroom. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) describe action research as a participatory study consisting of four spiral self-reflective cycles: planning in order to initiate change; implementing the change by acting and observing the process of implementation and consequences; reflecting on processes of change, and re-planning; and the cycle starts over again as can be seen in figure 1

Figure1: Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) spiral self-reflective cycles of action research



In light of McTaggart's (2000) spiral self-reflective cycles of action research, for this research study I first identified a problem related to learners' speaking limitations, which has already been described in the statement of the problem, chapter 1. Then, I made a plan to improve speaking skills and I applied it, this being the integration of PBL in my English classes; I observed and reflected on the benefits and the influence of this teaching method in EFL, and I considered the possible effects this plan implied. Later, I modified things based on the steps

taken in the first cycle, and once again I applied PBL and observed how it influenced on learners' oral production. Therefore, the research type, action research, which was chosen for this study, was essentially linked to a pedagogical intervention in an EFL classroom which will be described in the following chapter: Instructional Design.

This research was conducted with eight grade learners and included three self-reflective cycles since, as stated by Kemmins et al (2000), action research is developed in a cyclical way. In this sense, during this study, in each cycle students were encouraged to cultivate oral skills by developing one project per cycle (see chapter IV: Instructional Design). Data about students' oral performance and the influence of project-based learning on their oral production were collected during the pedagogical intervention, through data collection instruments which are described later in this chapter. This procedure embraced Koshy's views (2010) of action research as a method used for improving teaching practice that involves action, evaluation, and critical reflection; and based on the evidence gathered, changes in practice need to be made. In fact, as a researcher, I not only collected data in each cycle, but evaluated and reflected critically about the experience of working with projects in the EFL classroom and did the necessary changes in order to make sure that the problem detected was being solved in the pedagogical intervention.

Similarly, during the development of this study I took into account, as suggested by Koshy (2010), the following features to do action research:

- It is participative and collaborative (learners were aware of the project)
- It is undertaken by individuals with a common purpose (each group selected a topic and worked on it)
- It is situation-based and context specific (students could inquiry on their closer environment: their own lives, school, and neighborhood)

- It develops reflection based on interpretations made by the participants (E.g. participants reflected on the importance of solidarity and responsibility when they were conducting the projects).
- It generates knowledge creation through action and at the point of application. (students appreciated the new knowledge they acquired about other neighbors in their own community)

Reason and Bradbury (2008) point out the features of action research, namely “empowerment and improvement of participants” and “the engagement in cooperative work” (p. 176). These concepts led me to think about how important it was to my learners be more active participants in their learning process; and how relevant students’ personal contribution to the English class could be when doing any given project. Careful analyses of the definitions and viewpoints I have presented in this section surely helped me to understand my personal view of action research and the purpose of this research study. The concepts helped me to reach a better understanding, reflection, and solution of the problem described in chapter one (the statement of the problem), since this study attempted to solve the lower English speaking level of a group of EFL learners at Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School. By doing this action research, I was able to understand, evaluate, and improve my teaching practice in my classroom; positioning myself as an observer and a participant in students’ learning process.

3.4 Researcher’s role

In action research, teachers conduct research on their own situations and circumstances in their classrooms and schools. Teachers are the agents of educational reform. They are empowered in their job because through the process of inquiry, they are able to conceptualize and create, transform, and apply knowledge. In addition, teachers are able to reflect on their practice with the aim to improve it. Additionally, they must develop a more energetic and dynamic environment for teaching and learning, and in doing so, they are able to recognize and

appreciate their expertise. (Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2002, Koshy, 2010, Yin, 2011). In this study, my role as a researcher involved three facets: as a teacher-researcher, as a participant observer, and as a systematizer of the information. First, I recognized myself as a teacher-researcher. As Yin (2011) states, teacher as researcher is the main instrument to collect data in action research studies because she/he is into the process of doing research. Throughout this research process, I could observe, analyze, conceptualize, apply, and transform knowledge in the particular EFL setting at VGPS, focusing on oral aspects. Traits like students' shyness to speak; students mocking their classmates, students' oral production, and the recognition of their own personality and place in their own community were important aspects during the observation and the collection of data. Simultaneously, I reflected on my own practice as a teacher. According to Burns (1999), through action research, the educator has gotten a powerful form to seek in depth L2 learning. It means that I saw myself as a teacher-researcher and someone who wanted to improve teaching strategies supported by empirical research.

Second, I was a participant observer in this study. Marshal and Rossman (1989) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). According to Burawoy (1994) a participant observer is the one who is actively involved into the process. The participant-observer has "two way mirrors"; s/he looks at participants in their concrete existence, in their time and space; and s/he reflects on him/herself. I became a participant observer in terms of being the teacher, providing students with materials and projects, helping students in their learning process, and guiding students to enhance oral productions. As an observer, I collected information about learning procedures and attitudes during oral tasks and analyzed them under critical lens, in regards to promote improvement.

Doing this research study, I wanted to understand how speaking in EFL could be improved in this particular setting; and how project-based learning activities could be a tool to improve the development of oral production. It does not mean that the other three language skills (reading, listening and writing) were not part of the experience; quite the opposite, they were the path through which progression of speaking abilities was possible. Savignon (1983) encourages the teaching of oral communication skills as a contextualized sociocultural activity which includes an understanding of the social context where language is used, the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction (p. 10). As participant observer of the process, I agree with Guest et al (2013) when they state that "...there are often important elements of human experience that are only visible to those who are actually there" (p. 77). In other words, I made an in situ exploratory and explanatory analysis of eight graders' observable behavior when oral projects were carried out. I observed and analyzed situations related to students' different speaking productions, the topics they discussed, the way they spoke, the steps learners followed to solve and complete the projects, and the way they worked in groups collaboratively.

Finally, as a researcher, I became a systematizer of my own research practice. (Organizing the research process, writing what happened in the classroom, and considering what could be done to improve my practice). I collected and analyzed the data, arranged the information, and the findings of the experience and I made important conclusions and evaluations based on those findings. Thanks to this exercise, I gained understanding of the meaning of data related to learners' oral productions and cooperative work when they solved project learning tasks. It was as Guest et al. (2013) said an "intimate knowledge of my area of study" (p. 80). The only way to reflect and propose meaningful changes in the educational

practice is by having a real knowledge of the community where one is doing in-serving labor and research.

3.5 Setting

Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda is a public school located in the north west of Bogotá city, and it belongs to the social strata 2, which refers to a low socioeconomic level as it is composed of working-class population. The school is located in a neighborhood called Gloria Lara. Near the school, we can find a large commercial sector; there is a gas station and there are lots of groceries (mini markets, drugstores, clothes' stores, shoes' stores, stationery shops, telephone cabins, etc.) as well as many employers. They are constructors, drivers, mechanics, homemakers, housekeepers, among other working-class jobs. One can see a considerable population of young people on the streets, and some of these people are not doing anything fruitful, so they may be involved in gangs and juvenile delinquency. That situation shows concerns related to unemployment, violence, drugs selling and consuming points, gangs, and displacement.

In this social environment, there is a limited contact with English language and much less to speaking forms. The only opportunity students have to speak English is in the English classroom which is three hours a week. This is one of the reasons why most of the students are insecure when they face English oral activities at school. As already stated in the statement of the problem, they complained about their lack of vocabulary and their lack of confidence to speak in English because they were afraid of being ridiculed and mocked by the others and because they just did not have opportunities and spaces to practice English outside the classroom. It is also important to mention here that this school, as stated in the Institutional Educative Project (Proyecto Educativo Institucional), takes into consideration the development of the communicative competence in the native language; but in a foreign language much still needs to

be done to accomplish it. Regarding the English classroom, it is a big place to learn. There students take class twice a week; on Monday and Friday, so opportunities to speak and practice the foreign language are reduced.

3.6 Participants

There were 38 students from 803 (eighth graders), 24 girls and 14 boys. They had diverse attitudes towards the English class. As it was explained in the statement of the problem, the majority of the students did not have enough interest in the class; others knew how important using English was, but they were shy and they did not feel confident when they had to do speaking tasks. Most of them expressed fear of expressing ideas in English. Even though, they tried to do the class activities.

3.7 Sampling

This study used non-probability sampling because data collected by the researcher reflected on particular features of the population. (Ritchie et al, 2003). Purposive sampling and convenience sampling were used to select the participants in this study. I focused on the particular characteristics of eight grade students' initial oral performance in the foreign language and how that performance suffered transformation during the intervention, in such a way that I could answer the research question. It was a homogeneous sampling, too in the sense that as a researcher, I chose participants because they had similar characteristics such as age, socio-economic strata, and behaviors and attitudes towards English speaking tasks (Patton, 2000). As Ritchie et al. (2003) explain, in this non-probability, purposive, convenience and homogenous sampling, participants have particular features, previously mentioned, that let me explore and understand speaking development (p. 78).

38 students participated in this study, 14 boys, and 24 girls. They were aged between 12 and 16 years old. Even they sat in the same classroom; one could see they revealed similar behaviors when facing oral activities. Therefore, I decided to use a convenience sampling by choosing twelve students, four with an acceptable level of oral proficiency in English, four with a medium level of performance, and four with a limited level of English use with the intent to have a representative and fair sample of the population in order to analyze their evolution during the research process. The selection was made in this manner because of two major reasons. First, through these non- probability, purposive, convenience and homogenous sampling it is possible to observe and analyze carefully any transformation or change that could have happened to the phenomenon under observation. Second, this selection allowed a better management of the data collected and the analysis.

3.8 Data collection instruments

I used three data collection instruments to gather evidences from the experience during the pedagogical intervention. These are: Field-notes, Transcripts of students' oral productions, and, interviews. Besides, a format was designed for each instrument. (Appendices B).

3.8.1 Field notes (Observation)

In few words, field notes are written observations of what a researcher sees in the classroom, and they can be supported by video recording participants' interactions. Schwandt (2007) says that field notes are "written evidence on which inquirers base claims about meaning and understanding a social phenomenon" (p. 64) Thorpe (2008) describes Field-notes as contemporaneous notes of observations or conversation taken during the conduct of qualitative research. In addition, he claims that depending on the circumstances, the notes taken can be full

(e.g. verbatim transcripts of conversations taken by hand or recorded by a tape recorder) or brief notations that can be elaborated on later. This author suggests that this instrument must become very detailed, and it is not based only on the oral speech but in the surrounding of the situation given. Johnson (2012) affirms that observations involve writing “notes while teaching is taking place” (p. 213). He affirms that as participant observer just must write what happens; this fact is helpful to notice details and notice what kinds of events might be attended; and over time, patterns begin to emerge from the data.

According to Johnson (2012), field notes can be of three types: 1) thick descriptions during; 2) quick notes during, and 3) notes and reflections after. The first type is a bit difficult because of the particular conditions in the classroom, sometimes the teacher must be fully engaged in the teaching and the quality of notes could be not as good as possible. The second type becomes easier because it means taking quick notes to hold ideas later, by using extra papers or a list of the participants. The third one implies to watch the recorded material and write notes on what is seen, remembering what exactly happened. Doing the implementation of this research study, I mainly used quick notes during class development and notes and reflections after class based on recordings, as I had the opportunity to video record all the sessions of the pedagogical intervention.

Advantages of taking quick notes during the sessions and then complementing them with extended written reflections after the sessions, supported by video recordings, were really useful techniques because they provided detailed description of students’ behaviors, their intentions when working, and situations that facilitated the collection of the data. Another advantage is the fact that through quick-notes it was possible to observe aspects of cooperative learning when participants supported or encouraged each other to complete the steps of the projects. Another

important aspect was that, thanks to the quick field notes and reflections after, I detected important details that during the class were indiscernible.

One of the disadvantages when I took quick notes in the classroom was the fact that I collected a great quantity of information, and it was difficult to manage the data at the beginning. Another limitation with quick field notes was that I was busy all the time because students needed my supervision or support all the time. So, having video recordings the intervention and taking notes after each session to complement quick notes, was a great solution. Extended field notes were written in a format I designed (Appendix B.1) and were kept in a computer file.

The field notes I collected constituted aspects related to students' oral production as I took notes of what they said (verbatim sentences, paraphrased sentences, the way they produced speaking forms of language) and of the different steps and events required for each project (students' attitudes, comments, opinions, emotions, interests, answers when completing the steps for the project, reactions towards difficulties, vocabulary contributions, abilities, leadership among other things). These notes helped me to realize how project-based learning was useful to improve speaking skills. Thanks to these notes, I observed learners' progress when working in groups, how they recognized their capacities and their role in the group. Field-notes were taken in all the sessions from July to September 2015.

3.8.2 Transcripts of students' oral productions

From a linguistic perspective, transcription, in few words, is the systematic representation of language in written form. Bailey (2008) defines transcription as making a representation of "audible and visual data into written form" (p. 44) is an interpretive process which is therefore the first step in analyzing data. Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) consider transcription as an integral process in qualitative analysis of language data. They say that this method involves making

observation of audiotaped or videotaped recordings, followed by verbatim transcription coding and analysis. Even though some researchers seldom make direct transcription of verbal or verbatim data, this technique has been taken into account in qualitative researches as a primary source of data for analysis nowadays. Kvale (1996) characterizes transcriptions as interpretative constructions arrived at through choices made by the researcher. He notes that analysis begins during transcription. Lincoln (2002) affirms that transcripts and records are useful in describing characteristics such as background and academic performance of learners and in identifying strengths and weaknesses.

This instrument is useful firstly for determining learners' interests, positions and attitudes. It means through this method it was possible to see not only what students said, but how and why they said something. Secondly, it grounded in setting and language in which communicative situation occurred. It showed the event in a real time (Yin, 2011). Apart from that, doing transcriptions is time consuming. It must be done as soon as possible, watching the recording, transcribing the verbal forms of the participants, which in this case, were the oral productions during the projects, and analyzing the context in which forms of oral language occurred.

Transcripts of students' speaking production in the foreign language from audio or video recording were produced as a second instrument to collect data. These were used as the way to analyze students' performance doing something that involved their speaking development. By using this technique, I could not only have direct data of the verbal, oral production of participants' language, but identify other specific aspects of their performance such as: students' contributions to complete the tasks, the vocabulary and the way learners use vocabulary, and the relationships and roles students established according to the steps of the projects.

3.8.3 Interviews.

The third instrument used to collect data for this research study was interviews. Cannell and Kahn (1968) define a research interview as a conversation between two people for the specific purpose of “obtaining relevant information” (cited in Patton, 2001. p. 96) from the research topic. In this way, interviews provide the opportunity to ask the participants direct questions about the phenomenon of interest. For the researcher, it is a chance to investigate further, to solve problems and to gather data which could have not been obtained in other ways (Cunningham, 1993; Patton, 2001; and, Seidman 2006). Seidman (2006) adds that one important thing in this way to collect data is the interest in the other individuals; interest in their feelings and perceptions of their reality. Merriam (2009) defines interviewing as a “technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally” (p. 22). She states that there are many ways of conducting interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. Structured interview is used when the same information is required from each participant; semi-structured and unstructured interviews are widely used in qualitative research. According to her, conducting semi-structured interviews consists of having a list of themes or open-ended questions based on the topic, which make it possible a discussion on the topic in detail. In this way, the interviewer allows the respondents a bit freedom in their answers. The aim of an unstructured interview is for respondents to describe their observation of the situation, without any set of questions or interview schedules. Patton (2001) suggests that interviews may have structured and un-structured sections to collect more information.

Other authors such as Patton, 1980; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Cohen, 2007 suggest that semi-structured interviews are focus interviews because this kind of data include a small group

of people (5 to 10) brought together with a moderator to focus on a specific topic to questioning issues of practice. Focus groups interviews are discussions in which the moderator supplies the topics and monitors the discussion. The purpose is to gather information about a specific or focused topic in a group environment, allowing for discussion and interaction by the participants.

For this study, I used semi-structured or focus group interviews in order to “listen the voices” of eight graders (Palomba & Banta, 1999); to know about their attitudes or opinions about the implementation of project-based learning and cooperative work; and, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program designed from their own perspective. This instrument allowed me to see learners’ reaction to the projects.

As disadvantage, it was observable that was a little difficult to get the comments of some students with their own words because students tended to say what one of them had previously said. The interviews were conducted by a guide of questions (Appendix B. 2). I interviewed students from 803 in groups of 4 at the end of each project to collect information about students’ perspectives, feelings, and thoughts doing the projects, and to determine if they actually built speaking skills. Besides, I tried to identify the reflections students had about the topics discussed in class, including for instance, their ability to talk critically about themselves, their families, the problems of the school community and their local community. In addition, I inquired about the effects of working in groups as a means to enhance their speaking skill.

To conduct the interviews, I chose the school library because it is a quiet place. They were held on May 25th, June 20th, and August 3rd 2015. I used my mobile phone, a camera and a tablet to record the interviews. At the beginning of the interview, which was conducted in Spanish, I explained the purpose, the terms of confidentiality, and how long the interview would take. Each interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes. During the interview, I allowed the

interviewees to sit around a table. I started to ask the planned questions and students took turns to answer them. Sometimes it was necessary to ask additional questions, depending on the participants' answers as they provided information that I considered were useful about this experience or when students did not say much and I had to elicit extra information from them. I sometimes had to ask them to complement and elaborate more about their opinions. After the interviews, I listened to the audios or I watched the video and I transcribed them on a format designed to the transcriptions (Appendix B. 2). Finally, I analyzed the info by using AtlasTi software. Doing so, I coded the most common aspects, then I established relationships and later I categorized in order to analyze the data. Table 3 displays the data collection instruments I implemented during the pedagogical intervention.

Table 3. *Triangulation Matrix for data collection*

RESEARCH QUESTION	Data Source # 1	Data Source # 2	Data Source # 3
What role does project-based learning play in EFL learners' speaking skill development?	Field notes	Transcripts of students' productions	Focus Interviews

The data collection started on field notes and ended on focus interviews. Table 4 presents the data collection procedures during three cycles of this action research, including the dates and the projects students developed during the pedagogical intervention:

Table 4. *Time line: Data collection procedures*

	Week	Date	Instrument	Projects
F C I Y R C S L T E	1	May 11 th	Field notes Transcripts	TALKING ABOUT THEMSELVES Warming up – group organization – planning questions
	2	May 15 th	Field notes	Teacher’s checking – students rehearse and conduct the interview
	3	May 20 th	Field notes Transcripts	Conducting the interview – Making the writing report (PPT) – Sending to the teacher
	4	May 25 th	Field notes Transcripts Interviews	Presenting oral report Focus group interview
S C E Y C C O L N E D	5	May 29 th	Field notes	IS EVERYTHING FINE AT SCHOOL? Warming up – solving a worksheet – Brainstorming
	6	June 1 st	Transcripts Field notes	Making survey and piloting it
	7	June 12 th	Field notes Transcripts	Applying survey in the school community
	8	June 17 th	Field notes	Writing a report about the project done
	9	June 19 th	Interviews	Presenting orally Focus group interviews
T H I R D C Y C L E	10	July 13 th	Field notes	WHAT ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD? Warming up – memory game
	11	July 17 th	Field notes Transcripts	Brainstorming – organizing groups – planning the neighbor’s interview
	12	July 23 rd	Field notes Transcripts	Visiting the neighborhood and conducting the interview
	13	July 31 st	Field notes	Making a written report
	14	August 3 rd	Field notes Transcripts	Presenting oral report
	15	August 3 rd	Interviews	Focus group interview

3.9 Ethical issues

Research ethics were fully implemented throughout this study. I had to ask permission from the school’s principal, and informed consent forms should be read and signed by the participants before the pedagogical intervention starts especially if the study is conducted in a classroom. Therefore, following Drew et al, (2003), it was necessary to explain participants the purpose and the procedure involved in the research project, I informed participants that their

participation was voluntary and no harm was going to be caused in terms of their academic performance and human integrity. I also explained to them that the data they provided during the experience was going to be confidential and that their identities, including names were going to be protected. In other words, ethical issues such as participants' potential risks, their privacy, their confidentiality, and their integrity during this research study; as well as legal norms, including the informed consents forms were designed and applied (Appendices C).

Chapter 4

Instructional Design

“Decisions are more easily made when educators have reflected upon and are clear about what it is they believe about teaching and learning, about children and their life in the program, about their own goals, and about what they hope the children will become.” (Wassermann, 2000, p. 41)

This chapter presents the pedagogical intervention that was designed in order to collect data from students by looking into how 8th EFL graders faced speaking activities under the perspective of project-based learning. To construct the curricular platform that underpins towards the pedagogical intervention and basis for this analysis, I will present the vision of curriculum, vision of language, vision of learning, and, vision of classroom.

4.1 Vision of curriculum: Communicative language curriculum

Richards (2013) states that the curriculum is the term used to refer to “the overall plan or design for a course. It shows how the content for a course is transformed into a blueprint for teaching and learning which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved” (p. 6). He based his definition on Wiggins and McTighe (2006) who say:

“Curriculum takes content (from external standards and local goals) and shapes it into a plan for how to conduct effective teaching and learning. It is thus more than a list of topics and lists of key facts and skills (the “input”). It is a map of how to achieve the “outputs” of desired student performance, in which appropriate learning activities and

assessments are suggested to make it more likely that students achieve the desired results” (p. 6).

Taking this in mind, the vision of curriculum for the pedagogical intervention was a communicative language one. As stated in the first chapter, if the nature of learning a language is the ability to communicate, one of the salient aspects of communicative competence is the speakers’ capacity to use the foreign language orally, proficiently, and fluently in order to achieve communicative goals. The development of this ability represents a challenge in EFL education because of the few possibilities that learners have to interact with other people who speak English in their own community.

The reasons Nunan, (1991) states for communicative language curriculum fit the instructional design for the current study. These are: 1) it emphasizes interaction with the use of the target language; 2) it focuses on authentic learning situations; 3) it provides the opportunity of converge in the language, and also on the learning process; 4) it takes into account learner’s own personal experiences, and 5) it links learning inside and outside the classroom (p. 279). These five essential features can be enhanced through project-based learning as it has been explained in the theoretical framework.

In fact, the goal of this type of curriculum is the negotiation of meaning by the practice of the four language skills. Its syllabus looks for activity based, and reflects the process of learning. Its methodology becomes learner-centered, experiential learning, and active engagement in interaction and communication, elements that meet the goals of projects. The teacher is a facilitator, an encourager of learner self-expression, and the learner is a promoter of the development of learning strategies. In addition, the outcomes address the capacity for self-

reflection. Thus, project-based work was selected as the methodology to improve the speaking skill in eighth graders since this type of learning is essentially communicative.

Another reason for choosing a communicative language curriculum is that it is student-centered. It means that learners not only must make grammatically correct statements about the experiential world, but must also develop the ability to use language to get things done. Doing this, as Nunan (1998) claims in this pedagogical implementation, language could be influenced by situational variables such as: the situation itself, the topic of conversation, the conversational purpose, and the relationship between the interlocutors in an interaction (p.25). Communicative language curriculum centered in learners expects to enhance language through activities which simulate target performance. In other words, class time should be spent in activities which require learners to do in class what they will have to do outside. That is why during the pedagogical intervention, school problems and the neighborhood were taken into consideration.

4.2 Vision of learning: Experiential learning

As a teacher researcher I considered that the most suitable vision of learning should be experiential learning because, as its name says, experiential learning is the process of learning through experience; and one important aspect is that it involves reflection in doing so. Tudor (2001) suggests that we do not observe language learning in a tangible way because it is a mental process; but we could observe procedures and learning activities which are practiced in a classroom. Thus, the methodological choice made for this study was project-based work because is part of my classroom dynamic. Throughout three projects, eight grade learners' reflections on their EFL learning joined with themselves as individuals and part of the community.

The concept of experiential learning was first explored by Dewey (1915). His proposal of "learning by doing" was made popular by education theorists David Kolb and Roger Fry (1975).

Their conception is based on the idea that learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience. These authors suggest that effective learning entails the possession of four different abilities: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (p. 35-36). In addition to the development of these abilities, something that is useful to this research study is related to the criteria that the projects should be personally meaningful. In other words, the projects should involve students' whole person, including the senses, personality, and emotions; they should have opportunities to reflect on and discuss their learning experience throughout the process of experience.

Tudor, (2001) finds that experiential learning in EFL settings entails two main factors. "The first one is exposure to the target language (TL) and the second is the use of the language for communicative purposes" (p. 79). Additionally, he explains that learning experiences in context fits with learners' needs, learners' identity, interests, and concerns. That constitutes a personally meaningful experience depending on habitual modes of study, students contact and attitudes to TL and individual learning goals. According to him, the idea of the experiential vision of learning is that the use of the target language for communicative purposes involves students using that language, no matter if they have not fully mastered it. It takes into account difficulties learners' face when they are in the way to learn. This form of experiential learning rests on five main principles: message focus, holistic practice, the use of authentic materials, the use of communicative strategies, and the use of collaborative modes of learning. Message focus posits that language learning activities should focus on the processing and communication messages. The development of communication strategies could help learners to develop skills even outside the classroom. Finally, the use of collaborative modes of learning, foster the aid

between learners. They relate with peers, and see themselves reflected in flexible environments that stimulate communication, and promote exploration.

Under a learner-centered view of language, development experiential learning is essential to increase proficiency. It helps a lot to get a meaningful learning because it becomes more dynamic, diverse, and closer to the learner's expectations. I strongly agree with Nunan (1992) when he says that:

“Learner's emotional attitudes towards the teacher, towards other learners and towards the target language and culture are important variables on learning. It is crucial take into account giving a central place in the selection on content, materials and learning activities” (p. 234).

Through the curricular platform designed for this research study, I tried to include these aspects, focusing on communicative learning line, emphasizing speaking productions but taking into consideration VGP students' environment. In spite of the fact that the school does not entirely focus on English learning, one of the main constructs included in the school's coexistence manual, is related to the development of communicative competences as a way to foster the human development (Colegio Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda, Pacto de Convivencia 2014, p. 14). Besides, according to the students' opinions in this study as it will be seen later in the findings, experiential learning activities increased motivation and challenged them into a different way of learning, because they could talk about themselves using the target language.

4.3 Vision of language: Language as self-expression

Language as self-expression and language as doing things were the center of the pedagogical intervention because learners had the opportunity to express their feelings, thoughts, and desires through creative activities. Self-expression takes place through communication,

body language, artwork, and even our clothes and hairstyles. Tudor (2001) conceives learners as primary social actors and language as a social action. In fact, he thinks language learners are individuals charged by personal and affective expressions. He states “language is also the medium by which we build up personal relationships, express our emotions and aspirations, and explore our interest” (p. 65). Differently to the linguistic view of language where a system of codes is taught. This author claims for a functional view where the goals are defined by what the learner has to do. In this case, when language is viewed as self-expression, the goals are established by what the L2 learners wish to express, taking into account that each learner is unique and has his/her personal space to learn. In this way, teacher becomes a provider of conditions with which learners have the possibility to express their personal feelings.

For this pedagogical implementation, the vision of language as self-expression proposed by Tudor (2001) is useful in two main ways. On the one hand, it is beneficial in terms of engaging students to express their own feelings, thoughts, and life experiences using the foreign language in oral productions. This is made through project-based activities through which cooperative learning could support the improvement of the English learning in the classroom. On the other hand, it provides students’ reflections about their feelings towards their learning process, not only in their academic, but in their personal perspectives.

Additionally, we could see that Tudor’s (2001) perspectives of language as doing things is another appropriate aspect to apply in this pedagogical intervention. This point of view reflects on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) whose goal is to enable students to use the language in a socially defined context to do things of real life in which meaning negotiation occurs. The improvement of speaking skills, for this specific study envisioned how students operated effectively in a relevant situation of use. So, learners could talk and reflect about their

school and about their community. They could interact with their classmates and neighbors in regards to apply English in a more real context. Besides, instructional design based on doing things such as completing projects that require interviews, doing field work, and giving oral reports or presentations, can serve as a valuable motivational function for both students and teachers. That is why for students it is more motivating doing interesting things while they are learning the foreign language.

4.4 Vision of classroom: communicative classroom as controlled learning environment

The vision of the classroom for the pedagogical intervention was based on two main perspectives. First, the classroom was a controlled learning environment. Second, it was, over all, a communicative classroom. The reasons why I decided to carry on this experience with two visions of classroom are related next. I saw the classroom as a controlled learning environment because as Ellis (1984) says, “the classroom is the main place to teach,” (p. 89) it is the physical space where learning takes place at school; and, instruction facilitates language learning. In that area the teacher does his/her practice by thinking in fulfilling educational requirements and thinking of what students need. As a communicative classroom, learners were engaged in more meaningful and authentic language use activities; tasks for each project were completed by the interactions with other learner o members from the school or from the community.

In regards to the classroom as a controlled environment, Tudor (2001) expresses that the classroom is a place where “students meet to learn a language” (p. 104). Besides, for him, the classroom is a social as well as a pedagogical reality, which is influenced by a variety of social agents, such as the management of a teaching institution, sponsors or parents, and political and social stakeholders. This learning environment is controlled in the way the students are enabled

to learn the language by the creation of conditions undertaken in a structured manner, according to a designed learning program under the supervision and guidance of the teacher.

Also, the vision of the classroom was mainly communicative. Tudor (2001) states that it is more learner-centered, in which, communication has a significant role, where students' affective role is more involved in the learning process. Tudor deals with the distinction between classroom for communication and classroom as communication. The difference between the two relates to the precision with which students' future uses of the language make. The first one, classroom for communication, relates to the way to provide "preparation for communicative language use outside the classroom" (p.113), while classroom as communication takes into consideration a functional point of view. This means that the language skills which are developed in the classroom are designed to facilitate language use in communicative situations that students could "encounter at some future stage in their professional, academic or personal lives" (p. 115). Tudor (2001) makes the following remark in this respect: "Communication, then, is not just something which happens out there, but also a process which occurs within the social environment which we call the classroom" (p. 115). A communicative classroom gives potentiality in the resolution of difficulties related to language code or in the preparation of a project.

For the proposal of this research, and according to Tudor (2001), the classroom was a controlled place to learn, where methodology, context, and materials converged to the process of learning (p. 212 - 116). It was also a communicative classroom because during the development of the lessons, the learners demonstrated their active role when they interacted with others. They could express their feelings and thoughts towards their process. The importance of this vision of classroom is that learners became critical and reflective using English as a way to express their

ideas. Throughout the pedagogical intervention, the classroom was the place to share and build knowledge. That happened because they not only worked on projects in which they reflected about themselves, but went outside the classroom and outside the school to do critical reflections about their near surroundings.

4.5 Teacher's role

In terms of the action research, it is clear that the teacher represents an important role. She/he has the responsibility to facilitate language acquisition through problem solving activities which ensure learner participation and interaction naturally (Khan, 2010). Motivation theories propose that teacher's behaviors influence on students' learning. Self-determination theory (SDT) studies focus on teachers' instructional practices. SDT affirms that humans have three universal innate needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), and these needs are supported by social contexts in which people participate (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Khan (2010) affirms that to improve speaking skills the teacher must help the student to correct mistakes and to help them in differentiation of English sounds and the mother tongue. According to this perspective, I attempted to provide students with speaking projects to improve their fluency and accuracy in English and to give them the possibility to construct meaning based on their closest reality and context. To help my students to make learning meaningful and to improve their speaking skills, I proposed them project work through which they could express their ideas and their point of view about their own lives and their community and create connections with other areas.

Thus, the role of the teacher during this project-based learning environment was mainly a facilitator as I followed these steps:

- Proposed topics for the projects based on questions as theoretically suggested: Do you want to know yourself in English words? Where do I go to study? What happens around my school?

- Made a plan for the development of these projects (Schedule for the pedagogical intervention)
- Made the lesson plans for each project. These lessons had listening, reading, and writing activities that fostered speaking practice.
- Designed worksheet for lesson plans (where required) (lesson plans)
- Presented the projects to students
- Applied the projects by steps according to the lesson plans and the schedule assigned groups to work on the projects (each lesson had a specifically individual or group assignment)
- Oriented the development of each lesson and project
- I gave feedback for the development of each project
- Received and evaluated the outcomes

4.6 Pedagogical intervention

The pedagogical intervention designed started on May 11th and finished on August 3rd 2015. There were 14 sessions, two sessions per week. 22-hour class in total. This proposal aimed at reaching the research objectives by analyzing how students' oral productions operated in EFL learning, and to identify relationships constructed while doing project work in the development of speaking skills. This pedagogical intervention also situated these elements in the broader context of the classroom of 803 from VGP School. During the process, learners improved their proficiency in L2; and of course, they got a more extensive idea of the language than the one they actually had, and they could reflect about what they could do with it.

As the proposal focus was on speaking skill development, the current pedagogical intervention followed a methodology frame on project-based work approach. Nunan (2000) says "if learners can be encouraged to adopt the right attitudes, interests and motivations in the target language and culture, as well as in the learning environment, the successful learning will occur"

(p. 234). In addition, the design of affective activities involved students' feelings, opinions, desires, reactions, ideas and experiences; and included dialogues, interviews, preference ranking, personal charts and tables, revealing information about themselves, activities using the imagination like games, problem solving activities, content activities, among others. (p. 240-242).

This pedagogical proposal included three main projects whose main purpose was to make students fully aware of their own personal lives as well as their community, including their classmates, their school, and their neighborhood. The main task was to do fieldwork, one important aspect of project-based instruction, to become more critical about personal improvement, possible needs, present problems, and how they might contribute to change their lives and environment for good. That is to say, practicing language orally was not only for the sake of language learning, but for the purpose of real communication as students reflected critically about personal life issues through collaborative work. To do these reflections, students worked on the designs of interviews, surveys, and oral presentations mainly as can be seen in Table 5 which includes the objectives of the pedagogical intervention in terms of learners' speaking skill development and speaking formats as well in the projects designed (Appendix E).

Table 5. *Projects, goals, and speaking formats in the pedagogical intervention*

Date	Name of the project	Communicative goal for speaking	Speaking skill format
May 11 th	Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference	Asking and giving information about their lifestyle, personality, goals in life, and the role in the family, including defects and qualities.	A one-minute oral presentation about one classmate based on a previous interview and a written reflection about his/her answers.
May 29 th	Is everything fine at school? making proposals to improve our school problems	Making field work about problems they see at school. The students describe their reflections about problems at school (young pregnancy, drugs consumption, failed subjects, bullying, robbery, gangs, evasion from class, etc.)	A three minutes' group oral presentation about school problems based in survey's results applied to different people in the school.

July 13 th	Getting involved in my neighborhood	Talking with neighbors about jobs that are around the school, describing places, people, and concerns such as gangs, robbery, unemployment, etc.	A five minutes' group oral round table about students' findings on neighborhood jobs. Discussion about neighborhood's problems
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Taking into account that the pedagogical intervention was supported by action-research, as explained in the previous chapter, this proposal had three cycles. Each cycle was articulated with one classroom project. Now, I am going to explicate in detail the curricular platform designed:

As can be seen in Table 5, the first cycle named “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference,” focused on the students’ encouragement to speak about themselves. Students interviewed a classmate they rarely spoke to in normal academic life to find out information about his/her personal life and then give an oral presentation reflecting on his/her personality, lifestyle, goals in life, and role as a member of his/her family. Students had the opportunity to interview a classmate they did not hang around with that much or never spoke to. The purpose was to help learners create closer friendly bonds since, as explained in the statement of the problem, there were attitudes of selfishness and learners ridiculed each other’ pronunciation. Also, the purpose of this project was to recognize the human side of their partners despite the possible differences that could exist among them. This project took seven weeks. The learners had to plan and conduct the interview, and they had to prepare the oral presentation. Doing that, they became aware and critical about how important knowing their classmates in deep was.

In the second cycle, “Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems,” students did fieldwork about different problems they saw at school such as: social networks, young pregnancy, drugs consumption, failed subjects, bullying, robbery, gangs,

skipping class, etc. After doing a brainstorm about possible topics, learners organized small groups of four and chose one problem. Next, they prepared a plan to address the topic/problem assigned by designing a survey to collect school community opinions about the topic/problem. After that, students went outside the classroom to gather information about the theme, and finally they presented their results to the whole class. This cycle took seven weeks, and eighth graders had the opportunity to be conscious of real life problems that they faced at school; also, they could share their worries with other people from the school, and could assume a critical point of view about the concerns they had.

During the third cycle, “Getting involved in my neighborhood,” students walked outside the school and visited the closest community around school where students identify jobs and employment sources, and did a neighborhood project in which students did research about the necessities and social problems of their community. The main speaking activity they did in this project was to interview people from the business area near to school about personal information and social problems they saw in their neighborhood. After their visit, they had to make a written and an oral report. The project took nine weeks. A logistic plan was done to go outside the school. I had to ask the director and the parents for permission to have students leave the school at the time the English class was scheduled, and I asked for some of my colleagues help when the whole class was doing this fieldwork. Students, teachers, the school director, and the neighbors appreciated how important it was that learners had involved the community in their learning activities, and dealt with situation of the areas nearby the school. Table 6 contains the design of the projects for the pedagogical intervention, including the name of the projects, the speaking activities, and the detailed steps that learners had to take to complete the projects.

Table 6. *Cycles and projects for the pedagogical intervention*

Cycles	Name of the project	Description	Speaking skill format	Steps and activities to complete the project
Cycle 1				
May 11 – May 25	Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference	Students usually share the same space (the classroom) during the whole academic year, but many times they do not know each other very much. The purpose of this project is to establish stronger bonds and friendlier relationships among students as they start to recognize their qualities and personality. To do so, students will prepare an interview to get information about one of their classmates' personality, lifestyle, and goals in life, their role as member of their family, and what values are ingrained in their family. Students will prepare seven (7) questions. Then, they will interview a classmate. After that, they will make a written and oral report about their classmates' interview.	Interview a classmate to find out information about his/her personality, lifestyle, his/her goals in life, and his/her role as a member of his/her family. A one-minute formal oral presentation with the help of a written paragraph, a power point presentation, or posters.	Step 1: Giving students examples of how to conduct an interview. Step 2: Creating the questions to conduct the interview. Step 3: Rehearsing the interview. Step 4: conducting the interview. Step 5: Writing a report about the interviewee's answers. Step 6: Presenting orally a one-minute oral report about the interview.
Cycle 2				
May 29 – June 19	Is everything fine at school? making proposals to improve our school problems	This project deals with the understanding of school issues. Students will do a field work about one problem they have at school. First of all, they will brainstorm the most serious problems they think there are at school (E.g.: young pregnancy, drugs consumption and sale, failed subjects, violence, robberies, bullying). Then, according to the topic assigned, they will make a survey (5 questions maximum) to ask people outside the classroom	Applying a survey about the selected topic. A three-minute group oral presentation about the topic worked.	Step 1: Watching examples of school problems (video). Step 2: Our school problems brainstorm. Step 3: Making groups of work. Step 4: Designing the survey. Step 5: Gathering information. Step 6: Writing a report about the work field done. Step 7: Presenting a three-minutes oral report about the fieldwork done. Step 8: Debating

		<p>about that problem. After that, they will go on the field and gather the information (apply the survey to 10 people at school). Students must take evidence if possible (photos, audios, videos, notes, interviews, comments, etc.). Later, they will prepare a written report about their findings. Finally, the students will report the findings by giving a piece of news as if they were reporters (three minutes) about the topic worked.</p>		
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Cycle 3

<p>July 13 – Aug. 3</p>	<p>Getting involved in my neighborhood</p>	<p>Students will do a field work to recognize the neighborhood around school, employment sources and problems they see in the neighborhood. First, they will identify the employment sources they see around the school (E.g.: gas station, drugstore, groceries, hardware store, internet café, etc.) through a worksheet. Then, they will brainstorm problems they recognize in this neighborhood. After that, they will select one topic and according to the topic assigned, they will plan an interview (5 questions maximum) to ask people outside the school about where they come from, how long they have worked there, if they live near or far from work, if they are happy doing their job, what kind of problems they face there, etc. Later, they will go on the field and gather the information (interview people from stores around the school). Students must take evidence if possible</p>	<p>Interviewing people in the neighborhood that is close to school.</p> <p>Five-minute oral presentation about the interview.</p>	<p>Step 1: Warming up (memory game about places in the city) Step 2: Watching an example (video about La Candelaria) Step 3: Brainstorming Step 4: Organizing groups of work to make the neighborhood’s visit. Step 5: Making a plan. Step 6: Gathering information in the neighborhood. Step 7: Writing a report about the fieldwork Step 8: Presenting a five-minute oral report about the fieldwork done</p>
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		(photos, audios, videos, notes, interviews, comments, etc.). Next, they will prepare a written report about their findings. Finally, the students will report the findings by giving a piece of news as if they were reporters (five minutes) about the topic worked.		
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To achieve the objective proposed for this pedagogical implementation, which expected to narrow students to perform meaningfully working through the development of speaking, the criteria considered for the evaluation of the student's production were related to their participation in each step of the project; the use of appropriate vocabulary or at least comprehensible according to the task assigned; and their ability to negotiate meaning. Thus, this plan helped me to observe how students, from a subject close to their experience, built questions, answers, appraisals, etc., and how they improved their speaking skill in the foreign language.

Besides, applying this pedagogical intervention, with this specific group was a hard task. It represented some challenges. First of all, at the beginning of the intervention, students showed some kind of reluctance to be recorded. They were a bit shy in front of the camera. In fact, some of them expressed honestly they did not like to be recorded. If a student refused to be recorded on video, I suggested to record audio from his/her work. However, little by little, they were losing the fear and became more participatory in the development of each activity. Secondly, there were some technological drawbacks. As the students worked in small groups, there were not enough cameras (my camera, my tablet and my cell phone); then, I suggested some groups, to record their interaction by using their own cell phones. Then I collected and transcribed all the information. Additionally, planning each project was really time consuming. It was necessary

take into consideration each small detail and always I had to show the students a model on how to do the work.

Chapter 5

Data analysis, procedures and findings

This chapter describes the analysis of data collected during the pedagogical implementation and the work and contributions made by the participants during this study. I present the approach used to data collection and analysis, the validation and triangulation process, the way in which the data analysis was done, and the findings that emerged to answer the research questions.

As stated in previous chapters, the purpose of this research was to identify the way project-based helped eight graders to increase their oral skill in the context of a public school in Bogota. These EFL learners were engaged in three projects that involved them in making reflections on their own identity, their school problems, and the recognition of the business zone located in the neighborhood near the school. It was expected that students developed the communicative competence of the target language through projects related to their own lives and context. Students had to transform their passive attitude towards the English class and speaking production into an active construction of meaning and of knowledge in order to complete the tasks for each project. In my position as a researcher, I observed how they looked for the best ways to express their ideas in English, which sometimes were in Spanish as they often found limitations when communicating in the target language. Then, I observed how their oral

performance developed progressively throughout interactional and transactional strategies learners implemented in regards to complete each project. They were not instructed on the conceptualization of what interactional and transactional strategies are. I rather provided students with activities and tasks in which those types of speaking strategies were reflected, and I, as a researcher, analyzed how they used them.

The instruments used to gather data for this research study were field notes, transcripts of students' oral productions, and interviews. They were excellent tools to get good information that could answer the questions: What role does project based learning play on EFL learners' speaking skill development?

5.1 The approach to data collection and analysis

The information gathered through transcripts of students' oral productions, field notes, and interviews were transcribed, saved into folders, and later systematized by using AtlasTi 6.2 software. In order to develop the data analysis, I used the Grounded Theory approach to understand and describe data collected during this research study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) grounded theory aims to organize the data into themes and concepts the researcher may see. For these authors, "data analysis starts with basic descriptions of the phenomena and moves to a conceptual level, through the process of coding and categorizing" (p.12). To systematize and analyze data, I used AtlasTi version 6.2 through which I named codes, discovered patterns, grouped them, and found relationships among them to develop categories, a data analysis model suggested by Freeman (1998). It is important to say that Freeman's data analysis model was accompanied by a data triangulation strategy (Patton, 1999). That is to say, the data in the transcripts, field notes, and interviews were reviewed and analyzed several times in order to triangulate the information and start giving codes to significant data that potentially

answered the research question. Thus, triangulation was started by reading word by word, sentence by sentence, and paragraph by paragraph in the field notes and by comparing these data to the data in the transcripts of students' oral productions or interviews. In this stage and with the research question in mind, I started to label important data with names that were not only similar, but repetitive in at least two instruments. This will be illustrated with an example in the step *naming* in the following paragraphs. After identifying important units of analysis, I made groups of codes and started to establish initial pre-categories and connections and relationships between these units. (Appendix D). Later, I triangulated the initial pre-categories that I had found in the field notes to the transcripts of students' oral production, and to the data I had collected in the interviews. In this way, I was able to validate the data analysis in the three data collection instruments. Participants' answers in the interview related to the initial findings identified in the previous data collection instruments.

As the process of triangulation was taking place, I simultaneously followed Freeman's (1998) four stages to organize the data: naming, grouping, finding relationships and categories, and displaying. Naming involves labeling patterns in the data as soon as the analysis starts. These labels are called codes or patterns. In this case, these codes come from the data which are names given by the researcher. The criteria I took into account to name codes was observing what happened with students' oral production as reflected in the data and summarizing them in a small statement. This process was done with vivid data that could describe or represent the way eighth graders improved their speaking skills by doing project-based work and working cooperatively. For example, data showed repetitive cases in which students frequently asked the teacher or to other students for vocabulary, and reciprocally, they were provided with the words or expressions asked. I named this repetitive phenomenon or pattern as: *asking for unknown*

vocabulary and *providing students with vocabulary*. Likewise, when learners faced oral activities with others, they needed encouragement to speak and their classmates were there to support them. I identified these repetitive patterns as: *overcoming fear of speaking*, *giving peer support*, and *dealing with students' feeling*, among others. Thus, these were initial patterns or codes found in the data.

Grouping means rebuilding the names given to data in the previous step into initial categories. Then, with many different names ready, I grouped them into pre-categories. These pre-categories came from identifying the commonalities within the codes and the frequency in which they appeared in the data. This process was done by starting with a list of codes and its frequency along the data collected in the different instruments; then I made groups and renamed or used the strongest code. For example, it was observed in the transcripts and the field notes that to select vocabulary appropriately in order to complete any step for the projects, students frequently asked the teacher for the meaning of unknown words, or to other students. Thus, these singularities were called *asking the teacher for unknown vocabulary*, *asking other students for unknown vocabulary*, *the teacher provides with vocabulary*, and, *students provide each other with vocabulary*. These four codes were grouped under the pre-category “*enabled students to ask for and provide each other with vocabulary*,” implying the idea that PBL enabled learners to deal with vocabulary learning. This pre-category became a relevant and constant finding in the data collected in the three instruments. Another pre-category that emerged from the analysis of the codes related to students' diverse feelings when doing the projects, including *embarrassment*, *shyness*, *hesitation*, *fear of speaking*, *insecurity to produce language*, *frustration*, *happiness* and *satisfaction for having spoken appropriately*, etc. These codes were grouped under the pre-

category “*Students’ feeling toward completing project work.*” All these codes involved how students felt and reacted doing the steps of the projects.

Finding relationships, patterns, and themes was the next process to reduce data in order to look for the way to identify the main core categories. To answer the research question, I could identify four categories. These categories, representing the role project-based learning played on their speaking production, were named: increased learners’ lexical competence; facilitated meaning negotiation to do projects; allowed learners to overcome personal fears of speaking in L2; enabled learners to ask for and provide unknown vocabulary; and, encouraged students to rehearse their oral tasks before reporting to the class

The last step, displaying the data, was, in few words, a review of the categories I had found to make sure they answered the research question: What role does project-based learning play in EFL learners’ speaking skill development? At this point, I had to make final decisions to clarify, restate, and refine these categories clearly enough in such a way that they actually answered the research questions. Therefore; I displayed them as if I were answering the research question. So, I had to refine the categories with final changes and editions related to clarity and pertinence, as can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Research questions, Categories, and Subcategories

Research Questions	Categories	Subcategories
What role does project based learning play in EFL learners’ speaking skill development?	1. Incites learners to build new vocabulary in context.	1.1. By providing each other with vocabulary/expressions 1.2. By asking the teacher for unknown vocabulary/ expressions
	2. Helps to overcome fears of speaking in L2.	2.1 By preparing/rehearsing oral productions. 2.1. through code switching and translating between L1 and L2/ L2 and L1.

	3. Leads to responsible and goal-oriented learning in oral communication.	
	4 Raises students' interest to talk about their own experiences and the community.	

For example, the pre-category “(PBL) enabled students to ask for and provide each other with vocabulary,” which by the way was a very long statement, was reduced and finally stated as “(PBL) incited learners to build new vocabulary in context”, embracing the fact that students reviewed, asked for, and provided each other with vocabulary when working on projects in the pedagogical intervention. Table 6 shows in detail the categories and the sub-categories that emerged from the grounded approach analysis and the process of triangulation.

5.2.1 Category 1: PBL incited learners to build new vocabulary in context

In relation to the first research question, it was observed in the data that project-based learning played an important role in inciting learners to increase their language competence, as they had the strong need to learn vocabulary and express ideas to communicate and complete the tasks required in the projects during the pedagogical intervention (see instructional design, chapter IV). This finding was meaningful because it changed students' perceptions about the English class, since they did not care about speaking in the regular classes before this intervention took place, as it was explained in the statement of the problem.

Also, since students were encouraged to speak through projects for the first time in their lives, it was found that their communicative competence development was conditioned by their urgent need to improve their vocabulary. They discovered that they did not have enough lexicon to form sentences and express simple ideas when doing the speaking tasks. Students said openly that their major problem was the lack of vocabulary and that it was the basis of their language competence. Because of vocabulary limitations, the data analysis revealed that students'

language competence was mainly enhanced through vocabulary learning. Students' concern about their necessity to build vocabulary in order to communicate in oral form was carried out in two ways, which are analyzed below in sub-categories 1.1 and 1.2:

5.2.1.1 Sub category. *By providing each other with vocabulary and expressions*

According to the data, project-based learning was a learning method that incited learners to grow language competence through building vocabulary as they helped with each other during the development of the three projects, including, for instance, (1) the preparations of the questions whether to interview a classmate, their school mates, or their neighbors, as the projects involved all these people, (2) the rehearsal to practice the questions appropriately during the different projects (interviews and fieldwork), (3) the actual interviews and fieldwork on the spot, and (4) the oral reports in front of the class when they had completed the fieldwork.

Therefore, it is explained below how learners increased their language competence by asking for and providing vocabulary and expressions among each other in the initial step of the projects "Discovering who my classmates are" and "Is everything fine at school: making proposals to improve our school problems," as can be seen in these examples.

Karen: ¿Cómo es que se dice en inglés si tiene mascotas? Ayúdeme

Tatiana: No sé, sólo sé que mascotas es pet, y eso porque cerca a mi casa la tienda de mascotas se llama "animals pet" jajaja...

Karen: Entonces debe ser como you have pet.

Tatiana: Pues sí.

Karen: La última podría ser sobre lo que hace en el tiempo libre. What you... y cómo es hacer?

Tatiana: Espere busco en el diccionario. Mire la palabra hacer es make

Karen: Sería What you make... ¿qué seguiría?

Tatiana: Tiempo libre es free time

Karen: Ah ya sé, What you make free time.

(Transcript 4, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015)

Jonni: What are the names of the main characters?

Salazar: Camila y Agustina

Jonni: What happens between these two girls?

Salazar: With Agustina is making bullying to Camila

Jonni: What do you think is the difference between them?

Salazar: Bens (Jonni said him because), eso, because hay mad, mad? ... many differences

Katherine: Una es rich y la otra poor jajaja

Jonni: Sí pongamos esa

(Transcript 4, Project 2, Session 1, 25-05-2015)

It was noticed in these two examples that students had limitations with vocabulary to complete sentences orally, but even they knew isolated words, they were able to increasingly construct more vocabulary and coherent sentences. They often used L1 to construct the sentences but sometimes, they were able to use directly L2. There was mutual interactional support through scaffolding as they were progressively understanding and learning the foreign language in their urgent need for vocabulary and sentence formation, an important aspect for building communicative competence. In the first example, Tatiana provided vocabulary to her classmate by using association between words and by using the dictionary. She said the word “pet” because she connected that word to the animals’ store near her house. Also, with the aid of the dictionary she looked up the word “make” to complete the question “What do you do in your free time?” which they wanted to include in the interview with a classmate they did not talk that much to. The need to ask this question in the context of an interview incited her to look up the word “hacer” in her bilingual dictionary, and although she picked up the wrong verb, “make” instead of “do,” she was struggling with her need to produce language in L2, a need she did not have before in previous classes. Thus, the project on interviewing one of their classmates encouraged her to enhance her lexical competence and language oral skills (Field notes 1, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015).

In the second excerpt, John, Felipe, and Kathy were trying to use L2 directly to complete step one of the second project (Watching a video dealing with cases of school problems) (see second cycle, chapter IV). When Felipe said the word “bens”, John, who understood what they were doing, corrected him and said the right word “because.” Salazar repeated the word. Next, when Salazar wanted to say “many differences,” he hesitated about pronunciation and claimed “mad” instead of “many,” but immediately he self-corrected and said “many differences.” Then, Kathy added “una es rich y la otra poor” because she wanted to clarify one difference between the girls from the

video they had watched. These are instances of how PBL incited learners to provide each other with vocabulary and expressions because there was a communicative purpose through the projects.

Another interesting finding in the data about students' need to communicate in English in oral form, and that can be related to this pre-category, is that they decided to use one social skill to improve their language competence through their need to build vocabulary when speaking. This social skill consisted of asking and providing questions about vocabulary to their peers and close partners. These interchanges, whether in L1 or L2, were mainly interactional as they were socially and harmoniously eager and supportive to prepare the questions to later lead the real interviews through transactional processes. I would like to remind the reader that interactional speaking (Richards, 2006; Brown and Yule, 1983), as explained in chapter two, takes place when there is not a decisive and determining communicative exchange of information, meaning negotiation, or authentic communicative engagement in which important information is shared among speakers in a real process of communication. Interactional in this particular context, was rather conceived as having learners to help with L1 and use translation to find the appropriate vocabulary or expression to prepare the correct questions that they needed. So, later on they were able to hold normal transactional conversations at the moment of making the interview in L2, in which personal and authentic information was going to be exchanged between the interviewer and the interviewed. The fact that these learners were asking for and learning vocabulary in English to ask appropriate questions for an interview in L2, suggested that they were not having yet actual transactional processes in L2. They still were in a preliminary stage to do so as they were preparing and learning the vocabulary to be practiced in the interview.

Another significant social strategy that students used to construct oral language and vocabulary was to ask each other "How do you say . . .," "¿Cómo es?" and "¿Cómo se dice . . .?"

in L1 and L2 when they had the necessity to communicate, as being incited by the steps to complete the projects. For instance, in the first project “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals but respecting the difference,” students constructed the questions for the personal interview by asking these questions quite often:

Juan: Yo tengo las preguntas del ejemplo que nos dio la profe. Haga usted las respuestas. Mire esta: ¿Who do you live with? ¿Con quién vive?

Andrés: ¡Mother... father, eh! ¡eh! ¿Cómo es? How do you say hermano?

Juan: Brother

Andrés: Eso brother

Juan: Otra, what do you do in your free time?

Andrés: ¿Qué? ¿tiempo libre? ¡Ah! Play football,

Juan: Esta última la podemos usar, what do you want to do in the future? ¿Qué va a hacer en el futuro?

Andrés: Play football, síiii yo quiero ser jugador profesional

Juan: ¡Jaajajaja facho! Pero bien

(Transcript 13, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015)

In the extract above, Andrés asked Juan about how to say “hermano,” at first, he used L1 when he said “¿Cómo es?” but immediately he looked at the board, read and remembered the question that served as example to prepare the interview and used the questions in L2 and said “*How do you say hermano?*” Juan helped Andrés with the vocabulary needed to complete the information about the family members he lived with.

Also, we can see in that sample, when Juan asked Andrés “What do you do in your free time?” Andrés had not understood the question pretty well and answered “¿Qué? ¿Tiempo libre? Ah! Play football.” This situation indicated that Andrés had problems to understand sentences and vocabulary in the transactional interaction and, consequently, he hesitated and said the meaning of “free time” in Spanish in order to verify he was correct and to confirm understanding. This fact indicates how PBL incited learners to build new vocabulary and expressions in context, despite they sometimes hesitated and needed to confirm vocabulary use through questions. This example also implies that learners produced orally spontaneous language and sentences that they

were not expected to say, and this spontaneous language was produced because the projects, which were related to their personal lives and likes, enabled them to speak more freely in L2.

When doing the second project “Is everything fine at school: Making proposals to improve our problems,” learners continued asking to their mates about how to say something. As the initial step, students had to answer some questions about three videos which showed some school problems; then they had to design a survey about a problem they identified at school; they had to apply this survey and finally present the results to the whole class. One of the videos was related to bullying, the other to young pregnancy, and the last one to drugs consumption. The example below shows how they provided each other with vocabulary and struggled to construct complete sentences together to be included in the survey:

Jesica: A primera pregunta puede ser si está de acuerdo o no con las bandas.

Angelica: ¿Y cómo escribo esa pregunta en inglés?

Luisa: Pues banda de pandilla es “gang”. Entonces yo creo que para preguntar si está de acuerdo debe ser con “like”

Angelica: Escribo: ¿you like gangs?

...

Luisa: La tercera podría ser ¿por qué las bandas o hinchas de los equipos de fútbol son tan agresivas?

Angélica: Yo sé que “por qué” de pregunta es “Why” y... ¿cómo es que se pregunta? Ja... How, ah how do you say “equipos de fútbol” y “agresivas”?

Jesica: Yo las busco en el diccionario

Maribel: ¡Ay! Pues equipo es “soccer team”

Jesica: ¡Ah Bueno! Entonces busco agresivas. Aparece “rude”

Angelica: Va quedando así: “why gangs rude?” ¡No sé, le falta algo!...

(Transcript 11, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

One can observe in this excerpt that students were incited to work together to provide each other with vocabulary. The learner who was writing the questions for the survey asked her co-workers for the way to say “si está de acuerdo o no con las bandas,” as they wanted to include in the survey the question “Do you agree with gangs at school?” Luisa, contributed by saying that “bandas” in English was “gangs,” and she associated the expression “estar de acuerdo” with the word “like.” Likewise, to make the question number three, there was a cooperation between them. Angelica knew the wh-question “why” and she asked her classmates for the words

“equipos de fútbol” and “agresivas.” Angelica used the expression “How do you say...?” Maribel helped to the construction by saying the words “soccer team” for “equipos de fútbol,” and Jessica, using the dictionary, found how to say in L2 the word “agresivas” as she said “rude.” In this example it was noticed that students had limitations to complete sentences, since they only knew isolated words, so they helped each other to construct more coherent sentences. One can say that there was mutual interactional support as they were progressively understanding and constructing knowledge. Even though their oral production contained grammar mistakes, like for example the omission of the auxiliary do in the question “you like gangs?” we can observe that they were making a great effort to speak in L2.

Thus, Project-based learning not only helped learners to increase their language competence through new vocabulary learning, but helped them to review many words and expressions that they had acquired in previous classes, but unfortunately they had forgotten because of their dislike of the English class in previous courses. With this sub-category, it can be observed that vocabulary learning and grammar use were produced with a communicative purpose and the necessity to construct meaning in speaking practices and, in consequence, learners enhanced communicative competence to the best of their own abilities as stated by Savignon (1983; 2001) and Pattison (1987). Also, Project-based learning necessarily encouraged learners to use the foreign language as a system of expression and of meaning and, therefore, the development of all the components of communicative competence. In light of the theoretical views provided by Duffy & Cunningham (1996) and Grant (2002), in this particular experience project-based learning engaged students to construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and use skills through inquiry processes led by authentic questions in order to complete a series of steps

of a task of real life (make an interview). To sum up, they started to develop the need for meaning construction through social support and interactional functions of oral discourse.

5.2.1.2. Subcategory. *By asking the teacher for unknown vocabulary/expressions.*

The other social strategy that students used to satisfy their need to construct meaning in L2 was asking the teacher directly for the words and expressions they needed to prepare and complete the projects. During the preparation of the questions for the interviews to their classmates in the first project “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting the difference,” and the survey questions for the second project “Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems,” which were the first steps of each project, students realized that they did not have enough vocabulary and found it difficult to build complete questions and sentences orally as they ended up using L1 most of the time. Therefore, they started to implement social interactional skills (a function of oral discourse as explained in the theoretical framework) which consisted of getting direct support from the teacher as can be seen in this example.

Andrés: ¡Ehh! profe, ¿Cómo se dice ¿Cuál es tu nombre?

Teacher: What's your name? - My name is Pepito

AR: Ahhh! Ya!

(Field-notes 01, project 01, session 2, 25 -05- 2015)

The example shows that Andrés did not remember how to ask for someone's name in English. It is important to say that this eighth grader completely lacked knowledge of this expression which he should have known or learned in previous English courses. This situation implies that he probably forgot this basic question as he, like many of his classmates at this school, was not often encouraged to practice English orally in previous classes. This fact supports the statement of the problem in that these students rarely used L2 in oral performance (Field notes 1, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015). Additionally, this example ratifies that learners had a poor English level

when they started to work on the projects. Therefore, it was a big challenge for them to produce simple sentences orally at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention. It can also be observed that since this student felt the necessity to use language at the moment of preparing an interview, he used a social strategy, asking the teacher, to solve his problem with limitation in vocabulary.

Based on the data analyzed, it was seen that at the beginning of the experience the participants, like the one in the example above, mainly used L1 to solve their lack of language knowledge, and gradually they started to construct sentences in L2 with the support of others members in the classroom (Field notes 1, Project 2, Session 1, 25-05-2015; and Field notes 2, Project 2, Session 2, 20-05-2015). In fact, I realized that all students from eighth grade had limited competence. It was detected that at this school grade they had already forgotten basic questions and expressions about personal information such as asking someone's name, age, and place of birth, information that they had learned before in sixth grade. So, they were asking to the teacher most of the time how to asks these basic questions in English and the vocabulary involved in those questions. Sometimes, I answered in English, and they understood or remembered the expression; but if they did not understand I had to use Spanish. I could see that some students knew those expressions and vocabulary, but because of poor practice in more real contexts, they had forgotten them (field notes 01, project 01, session 2, 25-05.2015).

Students' need to ask the teacher for vocabulary and sentence formation was also detected in the completion of project 2, "Is everything fine at school? Making proposal to improve our school problems", as can be seen in these samples:

Miguel: (shouting) Profe... ¿cómo se dice "otra"?

Teacher: (I got close to the group to verify what they wanted to ask) What is the question? ¿Qué quieren decir?

Darcy: ¿Sí o no profe que "other" es otra?

Teacher: Yes.

Darcy: Ven.

(Transcript 01, project 02, session 1, 25-05-2015)

Yuly: one bullying other.

Teacher: But in this sentence is “one bullying another.” It is not “other.” It is “another.”

Miguel: OK, . . . deje así. Vamos con la otra pregunta (hacia Juan Camilo) ¿cuál es esta? ¿Qué cómo se siente?

Darcy: si mire que como se siente Camila. Pues mal (At that moment, Salazar is listening to music; he is not working) and Darcy looked at him (it seems Darcy is getting upset because her co-worker is not working the same as her)

*Yuly: La respuesta es **sad**, o sea que estaba mal (Yeneiris said “sad” because she knows the correct word to express the idea)*

Miguel: Bien, bien. La quinta es si busca ayuda (he is talking about the question number five)

*Darcy: Escriba que yes, la mother, jajajajaja (she identified that in the video Camila was helped by her mother)
(Transcript 01, project 02, session 1, 25-05-2015)*

One can observe in these excerpts that although students were incited to work together to provide each other with vocabulary, they also called the teacher to verify if the words were actually correct. As I was there, I told them that the correct use in this sentence was *another*, not *other*. In this example it was noticed that students had limitations to make complete sentences. They knew isolated words, so they helped each other to construct more coherent sentences, but they required the teacher's approval. The example also shows that Yuly was a student with a better English level and Darcy was a girl having a low English level as Yuly. Therefore, they interacted and supported each other through scaffolding as they were progressively understanding and learning the foreign language in their urgent need for vocabulary and sentence formation. In fact, during this research project, it was confirmed Grant's (2002) statement that project-based learning is an ideal teaching approach through which learners engage in investigative work (interviews and surveys), and collaborate with others (the teacher) through scaffolding and opportunities for reflection on the topic worked and on the language needed to communicate. An aspect to note here is that although these two students had an English level which was probably higher than that of their classmates, they were still teacher field dependent. This is an important aspect for building communicative competence. Thus, project-based learning involved them in real life situations (getting ready with questions to interview other people), and they started to develop the need for meaning construction through social support and interactional functions of oral discourse.

Similarly, although students were motivated to do the projects, they were somehow troubled because they did not have enough vocabulary and language forms, as it also happened when they were preparing the questions for the third project “Getting involved with my neighborhood.” One salient finding in the data is that students themselves suggested social strategies to help each other with the teachers’ support due to their language limitations and the necessity to develop their L2 communicative competence. Such was the case when the whole group, not small groups, worked together with the first step of this project. Jonni, Nazly, and Yuly suggested me to prepare the questions for the interview all together as they needed the constant approval and the support of the teacher even in the last project. They said that since all of them were going out of school to collect survey data from the people in the neighborhood and were going to ask the same questions, they found supportive and useful to work in group, with the teacher facilitating this process (Field-notes 02, Project 03, 17-07-2015).

As a researcher, I found students’ proposal an important step to not only complete the project through collaboration and scaffolding between them and the teacher, but I saw them as resourceful learners to learn the foreign language in an interactional manner. This fact, produced students’ motivation because they were incited to make meaning using L2 (Field notes 6, Project 3, 17-07-2015). Learners were attentive and participative when they constructed the questions, and they provided each other with words or expressions needed to the interview as it can be observable in the extracts below. This example shows how all the students prepared the questions with the support of the teacher’s orientation.

Teacher: OK guys. What would be the first thing to say when you are in front of the people in the different stores?

Rocha: Saludar!

Teacher: That’s right! And after say good afternoon, what do we need to ask? Let’s talk about the questions.

Remember that our main objective is to meet this people and to know what they think about the neighborhood.

John: Como se llama

Teacher: OK. How do you say “¿Cómo se llama?” in English?

Yuly: What’s your name?

Teacher: Excellent Yuly.... (I wrote the question on the board) luego...

(Field-notes 6, Project 03, 17-07-2015).

Rocha: La edad

T: OK Mr. Rocha but in English, How...

Nazly: How old are you?

Teacher: Perfect (I wrote the question) what else? More questions guys, ...

Rocha: Que si tiene hijos

Karen: Have children

Teacher: Very nice Karen but at the beginning you use "Do you have..."

Nazly: Do you have children?

(Field-notes 6, Project 03, 17-07-2015).

The data above show how students were excited about planning the questions for the fieldwork in their neighborhood as they were concerned about the correct use of language and vocabulary. Interestingly, it was detected that in the previous projects, students had reviewed how to ask *wh* questions about personal information. Now, in this part of the third project, they knew *wh* questions better and were surer about how to ask those questions and enjoyed the experience to speak in English orally. This fact indicates that they were increasing their language competence by satisfying their need for vocabulary learning and review. Consequently, by asking the teacher for unknown vocabulary and expressions, they also learned more language from one project to another.

Students' recognition of their need to build their lexical competence as essential to foster their oral language competence was also revealed in the interviews held by the teacher researcher to inquire about their opinions of the experience with projects. During the interview, which was carried out in Spanish, students recognized their difficulties and at the same time, they expressed how they solved those problems:

Romero: Yo estaba nervioso

Teacher: Andrés. ¿Por qué te sentías nervioso?

Fabián: Yo estaba nervioso al comienzo, ya después no

Romero: Pues porque yo no sabía cómo decir las preguntas en inglés

Esteban: ¡Claro! Porque en inglés se escribe de una forma y se pronuncia de otra

Teacher: Pero en el video de las encuestas pude apreciar que tu ayudabas a tus compañeros, corregías, les indicabas a tus compañeros como hacerlo

Romero: Si porque de tanto oír uno ya se las va aprendiendo

(Interview05, Project02, 13-07-2015)

Teacher: ¿Aprendieron algo en la clase de inglés?

Kevin: ¡Si claro!

Teacher: Tú Kevin, por ejemplo, ¿qué aprendiste?

Kevin: ¡Ehh! A decir cómo se llama, ¿What's your name?, cuántos años tiene, si es casado o soltero...

Teacher: Y ¿cómo se dice?

*Kevin: Casado "married" y soltero ¿cómo es que es? (He saw his classmates like asking them for help)
(Everybody laughed)*

Teacher: Single, se dice "single"

Kevin: Eso profe, "single" yo la sabia, pero se me olvidó en este momentico.

(Interview 1, Project 3, Session 5, 03-08-2016)

The excerpts above are examples on how learners were aware of how they increased their language competence by applying social skills. In the first extract, Romero claimed that he was nervous at the beginning of the project, but during the progress, he paid close attention to the pronunciation of the questions in the rehearsal. Later, when he was conducting the interview, he did a nice job. In the second piece of data, Kevin recognized he had learned language and vocabulary when doing the last project; he expressed honestly he has learned the words "single" and "married."

These are simple, but important examples of how learners enhanced their communicative competence, and more specifically the lexical competence through social strategies, helping with each other and asking directly to the teacher, to solve their need to communicate and negotiate meaning in the foreign language. PBL created students the need to use language with an authentic purpose in mind, and they satisfied the need to communicate with social speaking forms and strategies in the classroom.

5.2. 2 Category 2. PBL helped to overcome fears of speaking in L2.

The second category, Project-based learning helped learners to overcome fears of speaking in L2, refers to transactional strategies EFL learners apply to defeat fears when facing oral activities. In other words, this category showed how eighth graders, in spite of having initial negative feelings such as fear, anxiety, insecurity, and nervousness when being asked to use L2

in oral tasks, were able to defeat these uneasy states to develop the projects assigned. Data showed that to overcome fears of speaking in L2, learners had to prepare/rehearse their oral production; and, learners used translation between L1-L1/ L2-L1 and code-switching in the different steps for each project. At the beginning of the process, when working in the first project, it was seen that learners had lots of limitations with vocabulary, sentence formation, and pronunciation and, because of this, they experienced embarrassment and hesitation; and they were afraid of being mocked by classmates, and concerned of what the teacher could think of their oral productions. This was initially detected in the field notes and corroborated later when I interviewed students at the end of the experience:

Teacher: Darcy, What's your opinion? ¿How did you feel doing this Project? (¿tú que dirías, ¿Cómo te sentiste durante el primer proyecto?, ¿qué paso en tu cabeza, en tu estomago?)

Darcy: En mi cabeza paso que iba a hacer el oso

Teacher: Why do you say that? ¿por qué piensas que ibas a hacer el oso?

Darcy: Porque es que la pronunciación es muy fea, es muy rara, es difícil

Teacher: ¡Yeah! You're right! Si es diferente a como se escribe, si es un poco difícil, ok. Pero ¿lograbas entender las preguntas que se te hacían?

Darcy: Si, más o menos

(Interview 03, Project 01, 20-05-2015)

When Darcy said: “hacer el oso,” it meant that she thought and felt ridiculous because of her pronunciation. Darcy was a girl that did not want to conduct the interview to a friend in the first project “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference,” because she thought she could not do this task. She had in mind her classmates would make fun of the pronunciation of words because she knew that English words were pronounced in one way and written in another, and because she was not used to speaking in English. When students started to work in the interview her face showed anxiety; but finally she and her partner did the project.

Similar negative feelings of shame were experienced during the projects by these other participants as they reported it in the interview:

Andrés: Con pena,

Teacher: ¡Ah! OK Why to?

Andrés: Si, jiiijijj

Teacher: (I translated to check if he had understood) ¿porqué crees que tenias pena?

Andrés: Porque no, por no pronunciar unas palabras, no sabía

Juan: Andrés, Si es que él se quedó callado

(Interview 01, project 01, 25-05-2015)

Andrés was a shy boy, and when he had to speak he used to smile nervously and his eyes looked down, and when he had to speak in English, his voice was soft. In spite of that, he conducted the interview with Juan, his partner.

The following data are a transcript of how some students were reluctant to give oral presentation in English. It was at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention. This was on May 11th, during the second session. It was the first time they had to speak in English among themselves, and about topics related to their own lives. Karen and Daniela were working together, and the teacher was walking around the classroom observing and listening to them;

Teacher: ¡Start Miss! (Lea lo que tenga)

Karen: Bueno (...) Hello. ¡Ay no! yo no voy a hacer esto! ¡Profe yo no me la sé! Jaajajaja (She laughs; she is very nervous). Ayyy se me olvidó. (another classmate helps her and says: I am firtin (other one says, fiftin years) Bueno “years” (behind there was a girl saying: “no yo no voy a pasar”. Ay no yo no puedo profe...

Daniela: ¡Ay no profe noooo! Esta muy dificil. Ay Bueno. I years old. I am student, jaajajaja. Ehh ¿Cómo se dice esto? Bueno I am eight grad, ¿grade? (I corrected her pronunciation and I said: “greid”)

Daniela: (repeats) Ah greid. I, I jaajajaja. I ... huy yo no sé cómo seguir

(Transcript 04, Project 01, Session 04, 20-05-2015)

In this session I spent time to check a pairs' questions for the interview. At the same time, most of students were practicing their oral presentations. When students were rehearsing and recording their conversations. they looked afraid, insecure; they tended to laugh nervously and covered their mouths with their hand, indicating that they didn't want to speak. Some students' voices were low, because they felt embarrassed and did not want the teacher to listen to them.

(Field-notes 2, project 01, session 2, 25-05-2015)

With the previous examples, I want to emphasize that at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention it was so difficult to involve the learners in the oral projects because they were reluctant to speak in English due to negative feelings of fear and frustration. Students in general were not comfortable and happy. As the teacher, I had to encourage them to complete the tasks and to speak in L2 and, although this was a difficult moment for both students and me, I realized

these students used two strategies more often in L2 in order to reduced their fears of speaking in class. These strategies became two sub-categories which I analyze below:

5.2.2.1 Sub-category. By preparing/rehearsing their oral productions

This sub-category deals with how the projects were useful factors that led participants to prepare oral tasks to overcome fears of speaking in L2 before having actual communication in the transactional experiences. Although learners showed they were nervous in different ways, one way to overcome the fear of speaking was by preparing their oral productions with the possible language they thought they were going to use at the moment of conducting the interviews and the surveys that the three class projects demanded. As it was said before, for each project students had to interact orally with others using English. They had to conduct interviews or surveys to gather information about classmates, problems at school, and neighbors' opinions. Data collected from project one "Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference," demonstrated how learners prepared speaking tasks to interact in an interview with a classmate. They had to plan questions, rehearse the pronunciation of the questions and target answers, and prepare the short presentations to report the information collected during the interview. To prepare and rehearse the oral productions, students supported speaking on writing as they generally wrote the questions or pieces of speech they were going to say.

The following selection which was taken from the interview of the first project shows that these two girls were able to construct meaning as they established a conversation in order to get information about their personal lives and goals in life and, in this way, do the task required to finish the project.

...
Nazly: What's your personality?
Ana: Shy and... friend... friend...ly

Nazly: What are your goals in life?

Ana: Study in the university, jajajajaja, ¿así?, ¿esa es la respuesta?

Nazly: ¡iiii! Vamos bien, mire siempre la hoja, ahí está todo

...

Nazly: ¿pero diga dónde? ¿Cuál país?

Ana: ¡Ahhh! Paris, jajajajaja

Nazly: jajajajaja, Paris no es un país

Ana: ¡Ahhh!!

Nazly: ¡Terminamos!!!

Ana: Huy si, ya salimos. Vemos como quedó

(Transcript 04, project 01, 20-05-2015)

These data taken from the interviews in the first project show that these two girls were able to construct meaning as they established a conversation in order to get information about their personal lives and goals in life. In this way, they did the task required to finish the project.

Nevertheless, it can be observed that they were nervous because they used L1 as a mechanism to relax and make sure they were speaking correctly. However, as they had rehearsed language in advance, they had a good attitude, reduced feelings of frustration, and even laughed because they were enjoying the experience of interviewing each other in the foreign language. Moreover, since they recorded the interview, they were excited about listening to the conversation they had just made. The curiosity that students had to listen to their own voices speaking in English was a relaxing and a motivating factor to overcome fears of speaking in L2. Additionally, it can be seen that the student who played being the interviewer had the questions written on a piece of paper in case she forgot them. Supporting their speaking production with written notes to complete an authentic oral task in this project was meaningful, since these learners, as being influenced by the project completion, were capable of producing language orally, a learning activity that they had never done in other previous classes, as it was explained in the statement of the problem.

After the whole experience, during the focus interviews with the teacher, all the students recognized their speaking improvements because they found strategies to leave fears and insecurities behind:

Teacher: Did you understand the questions your classmate asked to you? (¿Pero lograbas entender las preguntas

que se te hacían en la entrevista?

Darcy: Si, mas o menos

Teacher: Why do you say that? ¿por qué?

Darcy: Porque yo estudié [preparé las preguntas]

(Interview 03, Project 01, 2015-03-16)

In this interview, Darcy, for instance, recognized that she prepared/rehearsed her part of the task assigned, so she did a good performance despite the fact that she was a bit nervous. However, with the support of writing and rehearsal, she reduced negative fears significantly. Field notes also indicated that students gradually reduced feelings of frustration and fear of speaking in L2 as can be seen in these samples:

Initially when working on project 1, students were afraid of speaking in L2. When they were afraid, insecure; they tend to laugh and cover their mouths. Some students' voices were so low, almost whispering, because they did not want to be heard and feel embarrassed when I got closer to help them with pronunciation and fluency.

(Field-notes 2, project 01, session 2, 25-05-2015)

In this session (project 2), each group had to first design the survey. When I was walking around the classroom, checking their work and helping them, I realized that at this moment they were very motivated working in group, preparing the questions in English that would be useful for the survey about the school problems. They corrected pronunciation, mistakes, and were reading the questions. They even did a "mock survey" with their partners as a kind of rehearsal to later conduct the actual survey to 5 people around the school. (Field- notes 03, Project 02, Session 03, 01-06-2015)

The field-notes above were taken when students were practicing the questions and answers for the actual interview. These field notes show that learners, working in small groups and doing projects, were able to reduce their fear of speaking in English, and they were much more motivated to work in class. It was also observed that when doing the first project, "Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals but respecting difference," most of the students were scared, and they sincerely expressed their anxiety. They smiled nervously, covered their mouths with their hands, decreased the tone of their voices (Field notes 03, Project 02, Session 03, 01-06-2015). Progressively, when doing the second project, "Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems," students were more comfortable and participative. In fact, they were able to correct themselves, and made friendly jokes about their own work or mistakes (Field notes 5, Project 2, Session 5, 17-06-2015).

Equally, based on the field notes (03, project 02, session 03, outside the classroom), I observed that at the time of making the actual survey, students had quite reduced the fear of speaking in English with people from other courses to whom they had never spoken to in L2 before. This was an important achievement for the study because project-based learning enabled students to develop "speaking" outside the classroom in a more authentic way and they showed less anxiety to speak in English. For example, when two boys were applying the survey on how to improve the school conditions (project 2), they felt ready and sure when asking the questions directly to five people around the school (Field-notes 3, Project 2, Session 2, 01-06-2015). Another instance was when a group of five students took turns to conduct the survey as they showed each other how to ask the questions appropriately. Thus, Juan who was the leader of the group and had a better English level than the others conducted the first survey to a student from another grade. Then, by following Juan's example, Esteban conducted the survey to a teacher; after that, Diego surveyed another student, and finally Andrés, a low English level student applied the survey to a student from 7th grade. Later, in the focus group interview Andrés confessed that he was able to conduct the survey in a good way because he had listened before to his classmates asking the questions, and it was easier for him to see how others produced language first, so that he could follow others' example.

Similarly, students became surer, more relaxed, and more extrovert when oral reports were done. For the first project "*Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference,*" students did not like to give the two-minute oral presentations to report the information they had collected about their classmates' lives in the interview (personality, lifestyle, goals in life, role as member of the family). They did not feel comfortable, they were very nervous, and they talked with a low voice to avoid being heard and being victims

of their classmates' mockery. According to field notes 3-4 (May 20th and May 25th), while a few students had prepared the two-minute presentation, many gave excuses to give the presentation in front of the class. For instance, some students did not send to my e-mail their power point presentation before May 24, for me to check language use before they gave the presentations. Only 6 students out of 16 couples sent it. Five pairs of students, came with their presentation in USB the day for the oral reports, and 6 did not do the work at all. So they did not present their reports because they were reluctant to speak in front of their classmates due to insecurity, shyness, and fear of being ridiculed when speaking in L2.

However, for the second project "*Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems,*" students adopted a more enthusiastic and positive spirit to design their power point presentations and prepare the oral speech for their three-minute oral report. In this session, students sometimes read from their slides about the results obtained from the survey conducted at school, but they also spoke without reading, rather looking at the audience. For example, when a group was presenting results related to their fieldwork about fights at school, one student started their presentation saying "*We work in school fights, las peleas.*" He said this in front of the whole class, showing he was sure about what he was talking about. Then, he looked at the screen and started to read from the Power Point presentation. He read: "*It seemed to us an important issue.*" One of his co-workers added by reading from the slide: "*all persons see one;*" he was explaining that everybody at school had seen a fight among students. Next, this group explained the causes of this school problem. Diego, another member of this group, wanted to express that fights at school were provoked when students had several disagreements between them, and then he said without looking at the slides: "*We would say that the differences,*" and immediately they showed some statistics from the answers giving by the people they surveyed.

(See snapshots 2-3). They continued reporting their results by talking about the fact that everybody had seen fights at school by saying: “*in the school community todos see a fight.*” The quantity of fights between students seen “*3-5 fights (han visto)*” and how many people had participated in fights, “*3 persons have fought and 2 no fought.*” (Field-notes 06, project 02, 19-06-2015).

Figure 2. Students’ statistic for oral report. Project 2

1)What Tope Did Your Work? (Que Tema trabajaron)

Reply=We work in school fights
 Respuesta=trabajamos las peleas en el colegio
 |

2)How many people did your ask? (cuantas personas entrevistaron)

Reply= Five, Two Woman , three men
 Respuesta=Cinco, dos mujeres, tres hombre .

3)What are the occupation of these people? (que se ocupación tenían las personas)

Reply= watchman,housekeeper,student
 Respuesta=celador, aseedora, estudiantes

4) their age average ?(Cual era el promedio de edad)

Reply=fifty- ten
 Respuesta=Cincuenta-diez

Even though this group did not send previously their slides to the teacher, they brought their own Word file and presented according to the oriented questions that the teacher had given them for this part of the project. This is clear evidence of how learners, despite their fears, their serious difficulties to make correct sentences, and their tendency to speak in Spanish, were able to develop speaking skills when they prepared and rehearsed their oral productions with time in advance. In this way, learners not only did the task, but overcame fears of speaking in L2, as PBL encouraged them to speak with a communicative purpose.

Figure 3. Students' words for oral report Project 2

¿CÓMO HAS VISTO UNA PELEA ENTRE COMPAÑEROS DE CLASE?
 How many fights have you seen?
 - ¿Cuántas peleas has visto?
 Have you ever fought anyone?
 - ¿Alguna vez has peleado contra alguien?
 Why do you believe that fights are presented at school?
 - ¿Por qué crees que las peleas se presentan en la escuela?
 how often do you see fights at school?
 - ¿con qué frecuencia se ve peleas en la escuela?

8) what are the responses of people?(cuales son las respuestas de las personas)

Reply=
 1) Yes 5/5
 2) A 2/5 B 3/5
 3)Yes 2/5 No 3/5
 4)Yes 1/5 No 4/5
 5)C 5/5

9)What could be a possible solution to this problem? (¿Qué podría ser una posible solución a este problema?)

Reply= be tolerant and learn to understand or listen to people
 Respuesta= tener tolerancia y saber entender o escuchar a las personas

Likewise, after finishing the third project, “Getting involved in my neighborhood,” the attitude towards oral reports presentations changed radically as students did not express any more negative feelings. In fact, when I interviewed students at the end of the whole experience, they expressed these positive remarks:

Teacher: Paula te felicito porque hiciste una muy buena presentación de su trabajo en la droguería.
Paula: Gracias, ¡ehhh! Thank you! jaajajaja...
Teacher: ¿Cómo lograste hacer tan bien tu presentación?
Paula: Pues nos dividimos el trabajo, Angie y Tatiana hicieron las diapositivas y a mí me tocaba presentarlas, entonces yo algunas veces las leí y otras hablé por mi cuenta.
Teacher: Y ¿cómo hiciste con la pronunciación?
Paula: Pues yo le dije a una amiga que me ayudara y me las aprendí
 (Interview 5, Project 3, Session 4, 03-08-2015)

The sample above shows my impressions of how Paula gave a good oral presentation to the whole class, and how I could verify that she had prepared her oral production. She was clearly motivated as she had done extra effort to present the work.

One important conclusion is that although students had difficulties and were very nervous when speaking, they participated by doing the different steps to complete the projects because

they used the strategy to prepare or rehearse the speaking productions with time in advance. It should be noted that the students were able to improve the speaking skill through the projects they did. This subcategory leads to conclude that when using PBL, English teachers should take into account students' levels of anxiety and tension with oral performance, and that one positive strategy is to give learners opportunities to prepare and rehearse their oral productions so that they can gradually replace their negative attitudes towards speaking for more relaxing, motivating, and participatory experiences.

5.2.2.2 Sub-category. Through code switching and translating between L1 and L2/ L2 and L1.

It has been explained in the statement of the problem that these participants had serious problems with the speaking skill in the foreign language, and that they were completely reluctant and embarrassed to speak in English before this research experience took place. Therefore, although it was a demanding task for these learners to use L2 more often, they gradually started to become aware of the need to speak in English in this pedagogical intervention because the projects requested them to complete steps that involved meaning construction in L2. The transition of getting used to practicing L2 more often, instead of using L1 in the English class, was not that smooth and quick; it was rather difficult and stressful for learners. In fact, after finishing the pedagogical intervention they kept speaking in both languages, English and Spanish, in the classes, and could not completely speak in English only. However, they struggled to negotiate meaning and to use English more often than before. This constitutes a meaningful finding in this research study because, although learners kept using L1, they were eager to use L2 more often as well. The relevant change through this experience relies on the fact that prior to this investigation; students only spoke in Spanish in the English class, a very complicated situation for both teachers and students. During this investigation, and with the help of project-

based learning, students started to use L2 more often, a factor indicating that they reduced fears of speaking in L2 and changed their reluctant attitude towards the English class. Learners' gradual transition to speak English more frequently in class, necessarily involved code-switching and translation from L1 to L2 and vice versa in many instances of their oral production. Translation was inevitable, but it was an initial step that helped learners to start constructing their communicative language competence in the foreign language.

Learners used translation between L1-L2, mainly due to limitation of vocabulary; they did not know how to make questions, or they had forgotten how to do it. Thus, they depended of their dictionaries and their classmates and the teacher's assistance and approval. Another way they used translation between L2-L1 was when they interacted with people from school community and with neighbors as they wanted to be understood for their interlocutors.

At the first moment, in the project 1, "Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals but respecting the difference," during the preparation of interviews or surveys students translated from L1 to L2 almost all the time.

Juan: ¡Profe! Mire estas preguntas que hicimos. ¿Cómo se llama?, ¿con quién vive?, ¿tiene mascotas?, ¿cómo se llaman?, ¿Qué hace en el tiempo libre? ¿así vamos bien, profe?

Teacher: OK. You have the questions in Spanish, why don't you have them in English, OK?

Juan: Entonces ahora las pasamos a inglés

Teacher: That is.

(Field-notes 1, Project 1, Session 2, 15-05-2015)

I saw that these two students used the dictionary to translate the questions, they frequently asked to the teacher for the translation of words in English.

(Field-notes 1, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015).

This couple of students first preferred to ask the questions in L1 and then translate them into L2. After translating all the questions from Spanish into English, they showed me the final questions which were full of grammar mistakes because students had done a literal translation ("you have pets? the names? What is your hobby?") (Field-notes 1, Project 1, Session 1, 11-05-2015). Based on the analysis of the data, students felt more comfortable and safe when they translated from L1

to L2 absolutely every piece of discourse they produced in the English classroom. Since they were exposed to produce L2 on the spot when doing the project, and this experience generated negative feelings of frustration because they could not say much, they found it useful to translate from L1 to L2 as a strategy to feel better and to control their levels of anxiety. Therefore, translating was an emotional support that helped them to start making meaning in L2. This sample also illustrates the influence of translation when using PBL at a public school:

Diego: Hicimos así las preguntas (students showed me the questions on a piece of paper) ¿cuál es tu nombre? (How is your name?), ¿con quién vives? (Who do you live with?), El nombre de sus padres (Your parents' names...? ¿Qué hacen? (What they do?), ¿Qué hacen los domingos? (What to do the Sundays?), tu comida favorita es... (Your favorite food is...?) y...¿tienes mascota? (Do you have a pet?)

Teacher: good job! Now, please practice with your classmate and record it

Diego: ¿Qué? ¿toca decirlo en inglés?

Teacher: And record with my camera, please!

Jonni: ¡Ah! ¿Y lo grabamos y ya?

Teacher: For this class that's all! but for the next you have to make a report, but written. ¡Don't worry! You will see how to do it next class.

(Field-notes 01, Project 01, Session 01, 11-05-2015)

As can be seen, these two students used writing as a support to have the questions translated from Spanish into English before the actual transactional experience in the interviews. In spite of grammar problems, I accepted students doing this kind of preparation/rehearsal through translation because I did not want to discourage them from using translation as a strategy that made them feel more confident when interacting with L2. On the contrary, I encouraged them to prepare their oral production beforehand regardless the strategies they used to accomplish the task. I noticed that when they wrote the discourse they were going to say orally and used translation to confirm what they wanted to say, they could deal better with the project development and reduced significantly negative feelings of frustration, anguish, and fear when having to speak in the transactional experiences. Translation was a preliminary step as part of the preparation that led them to participate more comfortably in communicative situations in which they had to speak on the spot with the people they were going to interview or the students who

were going to interview them. Translation was inevitable, not only because students were unsure and nervous to speak in L2, but also because of linguistic factors, including the fact they had a very limited language competence, they practically lacked basic vocabulary knowledge, they had never practiced speaking that much, and they had never been exposed to many authentic communicative tasks that required oral production.

When doing the first step for the project 2, “Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems,” students had to use the dictionary and the teacher helped them to prepare the questions for the survey as can be seen in the samples below

Esteban: Entonces busquen en el diccionario “suicidarse”

Fabian: Se suicide (jaajajaja)

Teacher: Use the dictionary to verify.

Andrés: Commit suicide

Juan: ¿Cómo es?, ¿cómo se escribe? Deje ver...

(Transcript 5, Project 2, Session 1, 25-05-2015)

Hower: Entonces una pregunta podría ser si sabe de niñas del colegio que estén embarazadas

Teacher: OK. How do you say that in English?

Nazly: Have you seen girls... “embarazadas”?

Hower: Preñadas, jajaja

Teacher: That's right pregnant

Carolaigh: ¿Cómo se escribe? ¡Profe! Ayúdenos

Nazly: Angie, busque en el diccionario

Angie: ¡Ah! Miren “pregnant”

...

Teacher: And what could be options of answer?

Carolaigh: Yes, y No

(Transcript 15, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

In the first excerpt, this group was answering some questions about some introductory videos that they watched to start working on the second project. They had to answer what happened to the girl in the video. Fabian tried to translate literally by saying “*se suicide*,” but because I was near to them and I listened to what they were doing, I recommended the group that it would be helpful to look for the words in the dictionary and verify. Andrés followed the suggestion and found the correct way which was “commit suicide.” The second group was planning the survey about young pregnancy and sexual relations between young people. The students built the

question for the survey and used the dictionary to translate the word “*embarazadas*.” Even these two groups had the teacher’s collaboration, they were eager to use the dictionary to translate the words they were going to use later in speaking tasks. Therefore, translation was a constant practice in this English class, an activity that was present in the development of the three projects. Although at first sight translation can be seen as a negative practice in an EFL communicative classroom by many researchers (Atkinson, 1993; Duff, 1999), it is necessary to explain here an inevitable fact: Because of these learners’ particular profile of not having been exposed to regular speaking activities in previous courses and because they did not have a good oral performance, they obviously needed to translate to be able to communicate in L2 and reduce in this way their fears and frustrations. It was concluded that through translation these learners were making a great effort to not only construct meaning, but to control their blockings and tensions when speaking in L2. What is more interesting is that they actually spoke more often in English once they made sure what they were saying through translation.

The following researcher’s interview corroborates students’ positive feelings in the second project for having used translation as a strategy to control their fears.

Teacher: Ok. What did you do during this second project? ¿Cuáles fueron los pasos para desarrollar este proyecto, lo recuerdan?

Angie: Después de ver unos videos, nos tocó trabajar en grupos las preguntas de nuestro tema, el embarazo en adolescentes, luego hicimos la encuesta con gente del colegio y por último presentamos ante todo el salón.

Teacher: Please tell me about the process to do the questions. Por favor, cuéntenme sobre cómo crearon las preguntas para la encuesta

Nazly: Pues... primero hicimos las preguntas en español y luego las fuimos pasando a inglés

Teacher: Why did you do that? ¿Por qué lo hicieron así?

Nazly: No sabíamos cómo hacer las preguntas en inglés o, mejor dicho, sabíamos algunas cosas, pero otras no

Hower: y Ud. profé nos ayudó, ¿se acuerda?

Carolaigh: Si, pero cuando las aplicamos nos tocó traducirlas a español, otra vez ¡pa’que nos entendieran!

(Interview 7, Project 2, Session 6, 19-06-2015)

...

Teacher: ¡Eh! Cuando aplicaron la encuesta con personas del colegio ¿cómo se sintieron?

Hower: ¡Yo bien! Teníamos las preguntas tanto en inglés como en español

Angie: Yo si estaba como nerviosa porque no sabía cómo pronunciar

Teacher: Pero aun así lo hiciste, y esto está muy bien

Carolaigh: Pues porque tocaba, era la nota, jajaja

(Interview 7, Project 2, Session 6, 19-06-2015)

The data above illustrate students' perception towards the project done. Nazly recognized they had limitations in vocabulary and language use so they had to use translation. Angie expressed her anxiety because she was not sure about the pronunciation of the words and need translation as part of her learning process.

Translation was not only practiced in the steps of preparation and rehearsal of language, but also at the moment when students had to give their oral reports once they had completed the fieldwork. This happened for instance with the third project, "Getting involved in my neighborhood." At the moment of holding the three-minute oral report, eight graders had a short use of L1. Field notes and transcripts from this step of the project show how learners started to use more L2 in their interactions though they also translate language into L1.

Bakery. John, Dayana and Rocha made the presentation. Jonni helped his coworkers to pronounce some words. He said words like "employee," "neighborhood." At the end of the presentation Jonni says that this girl answered the interview in English. Rocha translated and said: Ella nos habló en inglés.

(Field-notes 05, Project 03, Session 8, 03-08-2015)

When students were giving the oral report about the work done in the bakery, Dayanna and Jonni were reporting general information about the person they interviewed. Rocha, another member of the group interrupted by translating into Spanish "*ella nos habló en inglés,*" a sentence that Dayana had just said in English. Although it was not necessary to translate from L2 to L1, these data show how students used to translate much of the language they produced because it constituted a way to be surer and more relaxing.

It was also observed that participants translated from L2 to L1, especially when they were interacting with people from the school community. The goal of each project was promoting the use of the foreign language outside the classroom as it was expected that participants spoke in L2 with students from other grades and other English classes. However, when participants were conducting the survey with other students or teachers at this school, they discovered that other

students did not understand L2 either, or were not able to speak L2. This fact indicated that other students at this public institution also had serious limitation with oral production and language competence in English as the participants involved in this study (ninth graders). Because of this situation, the participants were forced to translate the survey questions into L1. The data below show how the participants who were conducting a survey on the topic on bullying and fights at school had to translate from L2 to L1.

Juan: Have you seen a fight in the school?

Interviewee: ¿Qué...eee? (everybody laughed)

Diego: Nosotros le traducimos

Andrés: Bueno el caso es que dice...

Esteban: ¿Has visto alguna pelea entre compañeros del colegio?

Andrés: Entre estudiantes

Interviewee: Yes

(Transcript 13, project 02, session 03, 01-06-2015)

This group was applying a survey about fights at school to a student from ninth grade. Juan asked the questions, and Diego translated into L1. When they started the survey in L2, the interviewee did not understand, so Diego said they will translate for him. Something interesting in this excerpt is that even though this student did not speak in English well, he was able to answer one question in English. He said “yes.” This fact shows that PBL incited students to produced oral language in L2, despite their limitations with understanding and their need to translate. It is concluded then, that the implementation of PBL in this particular setting led EFL learners to use translation in oral production as a strategy to not only reduced fears of speaking in L2, but to manage appropriate language, as they needed to confirm they were saying the right words. That is to say, translation was a useful strategy for learners to cope with the projects. Although translation has been criticized by many teachers, it is my conclusion that translation should not always be considered a negative practice. In this case, for example, translation was a determining factor that helps learners feel better in their attempt for engaging in communicative tasks. It was a bridge that motivated learners to speak English more frequently in class.

Therefore, the teacher needs to be understanding and tolerant with the translation strategies that students might use when they are involved in project-based classes (Ellis, 1992; Lewis, 2009)

Another interesting phenomenon observed in eighth learners when developing speaking skill was code-switching. It means the use of two languages within the same conversation (Gumperz, 1982). This happened due to the limitations on vocabulary, poor language level, and limited ability with oral production. Several times, eighth graders alternated between Spanish and English when having their conversations for the projects. On one hand, they often suggested, repeated or brought to the memory expressions like greetings, general vocabulary, or useful expression to finish a conversation. On the other hand, learners needed to compensate failures in communication.

The next passage taken from the first project evidences how learners had the tendency to code-switch:

Dayanna: What do you think about your family? What defects and qualities you see in the family of you?

Angie: Is beautiful. I love it. Is important. De verdad!

Dayanna: Thank you

Angie: Thank you (she repeated "thank you" opening her eyes. This part had not been practiced.)

(Transcript 11, Project 1, Session 3, 20-05-2015)

These two girls were speaking in English about their families. When Angie was expressing her opinion about her family she suddenly said "*de verdad,*" an expression in L1. She wanted to reinforce the idea that her family was really beautiful and important, and that she really loved it, but she did not know or probably forgot how to say "really" in English, so in order to compensate this need of vocabulary, she code-switch in Spanish "*De verdad.*"

Another example of learners having to switch from L2 to L1 in oral performance when using PBL is this:

Kathy: Do you like to travel to other country?

Alejandra: Yes

Kathy: Pero diga ¿dónde? ¿Cuál país?

Alejandra: ¡Ahhh! Paris, jajajajaja

Kathy: jajajajaja, Paris no es un país

Alejandra: Ahhh!!

(Transcript 04, project 01, 20-05-2015)

These girls were doing the interview in English. Katherine and Alejandra code-switched when they used L1 to talk about what country Alejandra would like to visit. They understood L2, but due to the lack of full understanding and vocabulary, they code-switched in oral performance in order to repair the problems in the oral interaction and be able to continue with their conversation. Therefore, when doing oral tasks in English, during the three different projects, eighth graders from Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda school took advantage of code switching, alternating their speech by using L1-L2 or L2 –L1 1, an inevitable phenomenon when they were requested to work with communicative projects. The examples below show how learners used words in L1 into sentences in L2. The first was taken from the project called “Discovering who my classmates are” and the second and third samples belong to the project named “Getting involved in my neighborhood”:

Angelica: What’s about your personality?

Nazly: I am very happy, I am an extrovertida, I am lovely, I am funny

(Transcript 07, project 01, 20-05-2015)

Karen: how long have you been acá?

(Transcript 04, project 03, 23-07-2015)

Juan Camilo: What do you think are the problemas in the neighborhood?

(Darcy laughs because Juan Camilo said “problemas”)

Juan Camilo asks: “qué? ¿Qué hice?

Darcy: jajaja usted dijo problemas y es “problems”

Juan Camilo: ¡aich! Cuidado uno se puede equivocar

Neighbor: ¿cuál fue la pregunta?

Yuly: ¿qué problemas hay en el barrio?

(Transcript 07, project 03, 23-07-2015)

In the first excerpt, Nazly was answering Angelica’s questions and suddenly she used code switching in L1 with the word “*extrovertida*.” In the second excerpt, when Karen was conducting the interview into the stationery shop, she code switched the Spanish word “*acá*” in

the question and she laughed because she realized that she had used L1. In the third excerpt, Juan Camilo used the word “*problemas*” and Darcy realized about it.

Equally, in these data, one student was conducting the interview when he spontaneously thanked a neighbor in Spanish for his collaboration:

Brandon: Do you live in this neighborhood? ¿Cómo se vive en este barrio?

Interviewee: No me gusta este barrio

Brandon (he looks at his classmates and indicates them to take notes) no le gusta... and then he looks at his interviewee and says: “thank you”.

(Transcript 4, Project 3, Session 5, 23-07-2015)

Brandon used code-switching using L2–L1 and coming back to L2. After the answer of his interviewee, he indicated “no le gusta” and he thanked his interlocutor to finish the conversation. As it could be seen data collected were full of examples (patterns) that showed learners tended to use the two languages in order to make adjustments in their communicative oral competence and be understood.

The reason why learners code switched was because they lacked vocabulary and did not know how to say some words or expressions in L2, as presented in the two first examples above. Some supporters of L1 use in L2 claim that it is natural this strategy in an EFL context (Cook, 2001; Cole, 1998). Consequently, they needed to compensate communication failures in L2 with the use of L1. Although this research project was not initially planned to discuss issues related to code switching, and the purpose is not to go deeper into it because it is a complex topic/field, it is important to say that based on students’ speaking performance in this particular context, it was challenging for them to speak, and because they did not have enough competence, they ended up speaking in Spanish or using “Spanglish” as illustrated before. Based on observations, this phenomenon happened because students were afraid of not remembering or not knowing the appropriate vocabulary and expressions, such as in the cases of “*acá*” and “*extrovertida.*” Thus, when they did not know the words, they immediately spoke in L1 in order to calm down, release

their fears, and compensate for the language they just did not know. Switching from L2 to L1 made them feel safer and helped them make sure they were being understood by their classmates. It was observed that every time students switched from L2 to L1 was to control tension and stress, as they changed their posture, relaxed the gestures of their faces, laughed for a moment for having alternated L1 and L2, and helped each other with the clarification of vocabulary (Field notes 3, Project 1, Session 3, 20-05-2015; Field-notes 3, Project 3, Session 3, 23-07-2015).

One important conclusion related to this category is that, despite the fact that students made many language mistakes, code-switched from L2 to L1, and tended to speak more in Spanish than in English, they gradually reduced feelings of anxiety and fears as they were motivated to work on their oral skills in the foreign language through the projects. This finding indicates that project-based learning involves learners in tasks that challenge them to negotiate meaning with different strategies in real communication, an important view of communicative language teaching. These findings support similar studies in EFL (Cole, 1998; Lewis, 2009; and Cook, 2001).

5.2.3 Category 3. PBL led to responsible and goal-oriented learning in oral communication

This category indicates that learners became more responsible and goal-oriented in oral communication since most of the data showed how they took responsibility, developed commitment through the suggested projects, and were able to achieve their academic goals. This category emphasizes one important characteristic that helped students foster their sense of responsibility. It is that they assumed the role of problem solvers through cooperative work. Cooperative support strengthened their sense of responsibility for finishing successfully the projects. Vivid examples of students' sense of responsibility as problem solvers was determined by their active compromise in providing each other with vocabulary, language, or expressions

when they forgot or hesitated during oral production. They constantly helped each other with aspects of pronunciation, and the completion of the tasks. Learners were progressively more involved doing each project. At the beginning, they only did the activities just because they had to. Later, when doing the second project, they seemed more motivated and involved. They started to be interested in the topics and were glad working on them. In the third project, they were very attentive to their classmates' interviews and were worried about presenting a good project. Thus, their sense of responsibility allowed them to be purposeful and goal-oriented with all the steps for project completion (Field notes 3, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015 and Field notes 2, Project 3, session 2, 17-07-2015).

Data analysis indicated that along the four moments to complete each project (preparation to do the task/project, the rehearsal of language production, the actual project development, fieldwork, and the oral reports after doing fieldwork) learners gradually became more responsible for their learning process and were more involved in doing oral tasks. Data revealed that students supported each other with many responsible behaviors such as helping each other with vocabulary, pronunciation, the preparation of the questions for the interviews and the surveys, and even with the camera to videotape the actual fieldwork (when interviewing and surveying people at the school and the neighborhood) (Field notes 5, Project 3, Session 5, 03-08-2015). In this sense, it can be analyzed that learning was especially characterized by mutual cooperation for the benefits of the groups. Therefore, one important influence of PBL is that learners became more responsible and goal-oriented in oral communication, and assumed the role of problem solvers through cooperative work. These findings will be explained in detail as follows.

It must here be remembered the fact that before getting involved in this research project, these participants not only had a careless attitude and poor enthusiasm for the English class, but were poorly responsible for their learning process, since they did not do much, were very passive, were reluctant to speak in L2, and found all the classroom activities boring and meaningless. In fact, they did not invest much in class participation and many times they did not even do their homework. However, one of the salient influences of having implemented PBL in this EFL class was that learners were more engaged in the different steps of each project, in the way they distributed tasks and handled the situations when establishing communicative transactions, as suggested by Richards (2006), with people around the school and the neighborhood. These facts show evidence of their role as responsible problem solvers and as compromised goal-oriented learners. However, their sense of hard work to achieve good results in the projects was slowly increased, as they started to move gradually from a passive, somewhat lazy, and indifferent attitude to active responsible actions to solve the problems that the projects demanded. This change was not that easy for them (Field-notes 4, Project 3, Session 4, 31-07-2015).

Based on field notes taken along the implementation of this research project, it was observed at the beginning of the pedagogical intervention that it was a bit difficult to motivate students to participate. They just completed the stages of each project because they were interested in a passing grade, even if they did not understand completely why to do the project or how to do it. In the development of projects 2 and 3, students were more involved, they participated more; they were critical and creative; they were more interested in exploring the topics, and became more conscious of their participatory role, a determinant factor that contributed with the steps required to finish the projects satisfactorily. Through project-based

learning and responsible cooperative work, learners showed four important aspects that demonstrated they were eager to participate when planning the steps for each project, when doing fieldwork, and when making oral reports about the project done: 1) they became responsible problem solvers, 2) they were participatory leaders of their own learning process. During the process of the pedagogical implementation, each step for each project meant a challenge.

Learners became responsible problem solvers when they made decisions to plan the interviews or surveys. As their self-esteem increased, the participants could be autonomous, they could think in a more critical way, they develop abilities to work cooperatively which help them to construct knowledge and fulfill the projects (Brown, 1993; Thomas, 2000; Kolodner, 2003; and, Grant, 2002). They had to discuss which questions to be used, they had to help each other with vocabulary or unknown expressions, and they had to make again part of the projects due to concerns presented among them. For example, doing the first project “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals but respecting the difference,” it was observed that they faced problems when recording their interviews; even so, they overcame these barriers and finished the project. (Field-notes 3, Project 1, Session 3, 20-05-2015). Interviews also confirm that students were aware of how peer support was useful and important when doing oral tasks.

The quotes below show this aspect:

Teacher: ¿Pero lograbas entender las preguntas que te hacían?

Darcy: Sí más o menos

Teacher: Y ¿por qué dices más o menos?

Darcy: Porque yo las estudié antes y con mi compañera también las practicamos antes de grabarlas.

(Interview 3, Project 1, Session 4, 25-05-2015)

Teacher: En otras palabras, les gustó trabajar en grupos

Salas: Sí porque pues si uno no sabe, ahí el otro le puede ayudar y así entre todos podíamos hacer el trabajo que usted nos dejaba.

(Interview 01, Project 02, 13-07-2015)

In these interviews, learners appreciated their classmates' collaboration. In the first sample, although Darcy was nervous when she recorded the conversation with her partner, during the interview she expressed frankly that a strategy to do the job properly was to prepare and practice with responsibility and cooperation. In the last example, Salas expressed how important peer support was in the oral tasks to solve problems.

For the second project "Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems," learners, as problem solvers, had to discuss what questions to use in order to gather information about a topic related to their school community. The following transcripts were done on July 1st, session 2, when the groups were planning the survey about the chosen topic and how they worked the theme with the help of the teacher and each member's contributions.

Hower: Entonces una pregunta podría ser si sabe de niñas en el colegio que estén embarazadas

Teacher: Ok. It could be the first question. How could you make the question? How many pregnant girls...

Hower: (laughing) you conoce

Nazly: Do you see?

Teacher: Ok. How many pregnant girls have you seen at school? And the options to answer, could be...

Angie: 1-2; 2-3; 5 o más (this girl expressed the numbers in English)

Teacher: That's right. You must provide multiple options and the interviewee must choose between them

Paula: O sea que ¿hacemos la pregunta y las respuestas?

(Transcript 15, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

Ma. Angélica: Preguntemos si publica en Facebook

Dayana: Y si le han hecho bullying por redes

Daniela: jajaja a todos

Teacher: Very nice. You could ask how often they hang or put information on the web

Daniela: ¡Ah sí! Y como se dice publicar en inglés

Teacher: Bueno, para preguntar cada cuanto ya les dije, "How often..." luego agregan do you... y publicar...

Dayana: PUBLIC jajaja

Teacher: No public but publish

Karen: Si, eso! Incluyámoslo

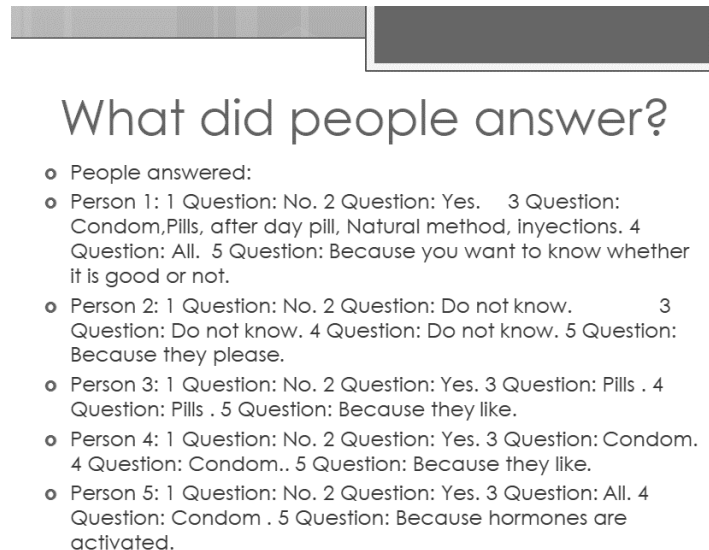
(Transcript 16, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

In the excerpts above, responsibility, commitment, and interest in achieving goals were present.

The first group did fieldwork about young pregnancy; and the second worked on social networks. These samples show how students were goal-oriented to participate by designing the survey questions related to the topic chosen and how each member of the group contributed to

the task. In sample one, Nazly was able to complete one of the questions by saying “do you see?” The teacher helped this group to refine the question by saying “How many pregnant girls have you seen at school. The second sample also show how participants were goal-oriented by figuring out how to write the questions for the survey on problems on the social networks. Part of their sense of responsibility relied on the fact that they used the dictionary to look up for new words, they prepared the questions for the survey, which took them almost one-hour class, and they focused on the way to better express what they wanted to ask. After they had the survey ready, they rehearsed themselves and then they went outside the classroom to conduct the interview with different people from the school community like students, teachers, guards, etc. (Field-notes 5, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015). The process of completing all these steps showed how learners increased their sense of responsibility with the projects in the English class.

Figure 4. Written support used by students to speak during final presentation for Project 2



When the first group made the oral report for the whole class, Nazly said that they had to organize the information they had collected. Part of their organized work was evident when they gave their oral report about young pregnancy and sexual relations. They had designed a Power

Point presentation (Figure 4) that showed how students were responsible and problem solvers in order to complete the tasks required and get good grades.

Another way in which learners became more responsible was the fact they had the initiative to learn. They were leaders of their own learning process as can be seen in these data when they were making decisions about the places they were going to visit for the third project.

Rocha: La panadería, bakery

Teacher: Eso es Rocha, súper

Rocha: Ya lo había buscado en el diccionario. Es lo que más hay en el barrio. ¿Cierto? Jajaja

Laura: El supermercado, ¡ehhh! grocery

Teacher: Muy bien. Algo más

Brandon: ¿La fotografía?

Teacher: ¿Cómo dices Brandon? La fotografía

Brandon: Si hay un almacén de fotografías

Teacher: Ahh! ok the photos' store

(Field-notes 02, Project 03, Session 03, 17-07-2015)

(Darcy is coming to me and asks: profe ¿Cómo se dicen cabinas?)

Teacher: Well maybe internet café or telephone cabins, I wrote as internet café

Darcy: Eso internet café porque ahí también se puede hacer llamadas

Rocha: Faltó la carnicería

Teacher: Ok. The butcher's

Ríos: Y la ferretería

Teacher: And how do you say that in English? We studied that the class before

John: Espere yo miro, profe ¿puedo mirar la cartelera? ¡Ah sí!, hardware store, jaajajaja profe mirela

Karen B: Y el casino.... ese que queda en la esquina, sobre la avenida

(Field-notes 02, Project 03, Session 03, 17-07-2015)

Being leaders implied being goal-oriented, and their leadership was detected when they were brainstorming the places and stores they were planning to visit around the school. Data show their level of motivation and how goal-oriented they were when working on project three, as they worked with the vocabulary related to places of their neighborhood and started to prepare the questions for the interview.

Interviews also confirm how students were more responsible doing the activities for the projects. The quote below demonstrates how students felt they participate doing the project.

Karen: ¡Pues sí! Todas hicimos lo que cada una se comprometía

Teacher: ¿Cómo así? ¿Podrías explicar cómo distribuyeron las tareas?

Karen: Pues Dayana y Angélica, que son las que más saben inglés hicieron las preguntas en inglés, y Daniela y yo las hacíamos a las personas en español.

...

Karen: ¡Pero sí! Cada una hizo lo que le correspondía y presentamos todo. No fue tan difícil

Daniela: Si porque todas estábamos pendientes de lo que había que hacer

Dayana: Si profe y en la presentación final se vio que todas trabajamos.

(Interview 8, Project 2, Session 7, 19-06-2015)

These students expressed that they liked the projects and they all worked hard doing them. Karen and Daniela were shy girls and they did not like to conduct the survey in English, but during the three-minute oral report these two girls presented some aspects of their work in a well-organized manner. In this way, they not only were responsible for and committed to the project of the group, but they helped until the end of the project and, they made a nice job as it was seen in the final presentations.

During the oral activities it was observable students participated more consciously in the projects they were engaged. They showed responsibility towards the tasks developed and dared to help classmates when they did not have a good performance. A student from the group that visited the drugstore, Paula, gave a presentation. She was a shy girl, but in this session she defeated her fears and spoke in English well as she had been responsible for preparing the oral report. I congratulated her for her effort. (Field-notes 05, project 03, 03-08-2015). The quotes below are examples of how students were eager to participate doing the project.

Luisa: Buenas tardes, ¡ehh! somos estudiantes del colegio VGP y estamos aquí para hacerle una entrevista para un Proyecto de inglés.

Neighbor: ¡Ahh. ¡Sí! la profe ya me había dicho de esto. Si niñas díganme

Maribel: Bueno, mi compañera Luisa le hace las preguntas en inglés y yo se las traduzco en español para que las entienda.

Neighbor: Pero yo no sé nada de inglés, les puedo responder en español

Yuly: Sí señor, no hay problema, lo que necesitamos es que usted nos escuche en inglés, esa es nuestra tarea

Neighbor: Bueno hágale

Behind Darcy and Juan Camilo are repeating and correcting some mistakes these girls did. E. G. Darcy Where no Where...

(Transcript 06, Project 03, 23-07-2015)

Luisa and Maribel had a lot of difficulties to do the interview because they were not good at English; so they interviewed the tailor of their neighborhood. They had clear in their minds that they had to speak English, a condition that they clarified to their interviewee when he suggested

them to do the interview in Spanish. Their pronunciation was unclear, but they did a big effort asking the questions. The other groups and the teacher Jair were looking at them; that is the reason Darcy and Juan Camilo repeated and corrected the way to say “Where”.

Something special happened that showed how learners were more responsible for and leaders of their own learning; is the fact that they could be autonomous. The data below show that a group decided to conduct the interview in not only a photo store, the place they had chosen first, but they also conducted another interview in the bike store. Even they had some difficulties doing the first interview; they decided to conduct another interview. During the focus interview, we talked about what happened and why they decided to do this.

Kevin: Sí. Estuvimos en el almacén de fotos y en la bicicletería

Teacher: Y ¿por qué a dos lugares si el que ustedes habían elegido fue el almacén de fotos?

Sebastián: Porque Karen no termino la entrevista en el almacén de fotos, y como todos ya habían visitado varios lugares

Brandon: Siii. Los de la panadería fueron a tres, las de la papelería también y nosotros pues no queríamos quedarnos sólo con un lugar

Sebastián: Y como en la lista que hicimos la bicicletería nadie la escogió...

Teacher: Bueno muy bien, tomaron la iniciativa e hicieron la entrevista en otro lugar, me parece bien
(Interview 01, Project 03, 03-08-2015)

This sample shows that participants were autonomous and had the initiative to make decisions to improve their learning process. It also implies how goal-oriented they were to complete the tasks. This sub-category leads to conclude that PBL played an important role in students' learning process as they were more responsible, goal-oriented, had the initiative to make decisions, were more autonomous, and, over all, acted as problem solvers, as suggested in the theory by Wrigley (1998) and Korkmaz & Kaptan (2000). These active roles and behaviors were caused by the implementation of PBL in the English class, a radical change of students' attitude, as they had never been so active and engaged before.

5.3.4 Category 4. PBL Raises students' interest to talk about their experiences and the community

Project-based learning engaged students in purposeful communication because they could participate in meaningful activities, which required authentic language use (Haines, 1989), and authentic situations of real life. Based on the principles of “learning by doing” (Dewey, 1960), experiential learning (Brown, 1987), and the development of communicative competence (Savignon, 1983), students were able to construct knowledge related to their classmates’ lives with the first project, about their school problems with the second project, and about their community with the third project. That is to say, instead of just learning language structures and vocabulary by completing grammar activities and doing simple reading comprehension exercises, learners were actually able to use the foreign language to speak about their own lives and community, an experience they had never done before. Therefore, their inquiry contained a social and humanitarian emphasis which asks participants to become more informed people about the reality, to reflect on their own concerns; and at the same time, to encourage them to act in order to improve this reality. (Stoller, 2012; Brown, 1991)., Since the goal of the projects was to help students show concern for their own individuality and human qualities as well as to gain knowledge about the welfare or problems of other human beings around them such as other students, teachers, administrators, and neighbors.

During the first project “Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals but respecting the difference,” they learned about a classmate. They exchanged information about the family, since part of the project consisted of interviewing a classmate whom they did not hang around much with in order to reduce attitudes of selfishness, indifference, and separation among learners; as explained in the statement of the problem. When students were doing this first project, they discovered a different human perspective of their classmates as they were only used to share classroom and academic life, but never cared about others’ personal facets,

including their families, life styles, and life stories. This project created empathy and respect toward those partners that were distant, and who did not have a topic of conversation other than the academic work. So, PBL allowed learners to create friendly ties as they started to appreciate, respect, and listen to those they had ignored somehow in the past (Field-notes 3 and 4, Project 1, Session 3 and 4, 20-05-2015/25-05-2015; and Interviews 2, 5, 6, Project 1, Session 4, 25-05-2015). The following excerpts, which were taken from the oral reports, demonstrate how students gained knowledge of their classmates' life stories:

Laura: Hower Crespo has 15 years old. He is a student in VGP school. He likes hamburger and pasta. He has a sister and another sister, she is in seventh grade. He lives with his mother; his father is in Cali. His father not lives with the family. He love the mother and I... he like to cuidar sisters. (Field-notes, project 1, session 4, 25-05-2015)

Although the oral production in this sample may seem somewhat basic, it actually represents a great speaking achievement for these learners during the experience, taking into account that they were totally reluctant to speak in L2 before. PBL use in the classroom shows that students actually had to use L2 orally despite grammar mistakes and limitations because they had a goal to achieve based on a real-world context. Moreover, this sample evidenced how learners were able to report new knowledge about one person they rarely talked to in class, and saw their classmates as human beings like them, having other roles and life stories apart from their academic life. In this case, for example, Laura discovered that Hower's parents were divorced and lived in different cities, and that he was very caring with his sister and mother, assuming somehow emotional support for his family as he had become the man of the house ready to protect them. She also learned about his personal hobbies. Thus, learners developed sympathy as it was noticed through the tone of voice in their oral speech that showed respect and admiration for their classmates' life stories and sometimes-difficult experiences. In terms of knowledge, Laura and the rest of students learned about the human dimension of their classmates in different contexts from the academic life (family, hobbies, lifestyles, hopes, dreams). Through the

interview and the oral reports presented to the whole class, these students learnt to generate empathy as they felt identified with their partners. This aspect represented a first step to be more respectful, collaborative, and tolerant with each other. This can be corroborated with students' opinions in the interview:

Teacher: Ok guys! I want to know how you felt doing this first project. ¿Cómo se sintieron haciendo este Proyecto? ¿Qué notaron diferente? Gina cuéntanos

Gina: Chévere, sí, muy chévere, porque uno aprende, yo, por ejemplo, vocabulario, a pronunciar, a saber más

Salcedo: Sí. Incluso conoce más a los compañeros, sobre su familia, sus gustos, lo que quiere hacer en la vida.

Teacher: Y, ¿qué piensan de trabajar con compañeros haciendo actividades orales como estas? ¿creen que las correcciones, esas palabritas que proporcionaron los compañeros son útiles?

Tatiana: Sí, profe, ayudan mucho. Es que así es que mejoramos en inglés

Salcedo: Uno se siente apoyado

(Interview 2, Project 1, Session 5, 25-05-2015)

These samples show that students recognized that they not only gained language knowledge, but were able to learn interesting information about their classmates' likes, family, plans to improve their lives, and life stories.

A similar situation that showed how learners gained better knowledge of their classmates was when they were paying attention to Felipe giving a presentation on Gina's life. Gina was well known for being indifferent, intolerant, and sometimes rude with her classmates; but after Felipe's presentation, students understood the reasons why she sometimes got upset. She missed his father very much because he did not live with her, as because of this separation, she was always melancholic and bad-tempered. Interestingly, from another report, students learned that Crespo was not living with his dad either, so several students reported having the same situation, that their parents were separated and they lived with only one parent. As students discovered these similar experiences in their lives, they started to create positive feelings of compassion and understanding, and identified among themselves with their life stories and common family problems. This is a meaningful aspect that project-based learning generated in the learners after doing this study.

Felipe: Gina not like the name. She likes the name Alejandra. She has 15 years. She likes meat. Gina live with mother. She not have father. The mother is Hortencia. She live in Corinto.

Alejandra: Felipe is 15 years. She likes hamburger and hot dog. He live with mother, father and brother. The brother is Juan Camilo. He is in the school, in seven. He live with the family in Gloria Lara.

(Transcript 9, Project 1, Session 4, 25-05-2015)

From this project, the eighth grade students learned the value of the family and respect for the other; in other words, to respect differences, a very useful value to coexist in peace. They started to think about the meaning of friendship and the importance to have good social relationships with others who also had similar problems and achievements in life.

For the second project “Is everything fine at school? Making proposals to improve our school problems,” as it was already explained, students became more aware of problematic social issues they usually faced and actually affected their learning environment and their coexistence. Through this second project, they learned about other members’ (students, teachers, direction, etc.) opinions about and feelings toward the problems of the school, related to bullying, the risk of using social networks, school fights, and drugs consumption, among others. They did fieldwork through a survey where they inquired the community impressions and opinions about the topics selected. In order to describe the findings about this perspective, I would like to deal with four topics: bullying, fights at school, young pregnancy and sexual relations, and drugs consumption.

One of the most representative problems students investigated through the projects was bullying because it had become a visible problem among students at school; and it generated additional problems such as fights and power relations. Students did not speak much about this topic, but bullying was practiced in and outside school. Therefore, interviewers concluded that there were incidents related to disagreement, intolerance, discrimination, disrespect, and abuse among students, and this produced aggression, rebelliousness, sadness, and fights. The data

below show the results students displayed in their power point presentations after having concluded the survey on issues related to bullying:

Yuly: Why do you think there is bullying at school?

- A. Discrimination*
- B. Intolerance*
- C. For fun*
- D. Superiority believes*
- E.*

(...)

Interviewee # 4: F. Todas

Yuly: How often the others made fun of you?

- A. 0*
- B. About 5 times*
- C. More than 5 times*

Interviewee # 4: B

Yuly: You've done bullying? [Have you bullied some one?]

(...)

Interviewee # 4: Yes

Darcy: ¿Por qué? ¿por qué ha hecho bullying?

Interviewee # 4: Sí a mí me lo han hecho, yo también lo hago...

(Transcript 1, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

It can be observed that when they made the oral report they presented a table with the conclusion they got based on the answers given by the people they interviewed. By doing this fieldwork, these students learnt that bullying had increased in their school community and they suggested that the possible solution to this problem would be to do an activity to create awareness about the effects of bullying.

Another interesting topic worked by students was the one which dealt with fights at school. This group inquired about the quantity and the frequency of fights among students. Besides, they asked about the causes that led people to take part in this violent practice. According to the answers obtained in the survey, they found there were increasing levels of intolerance and disrespect of students at school. The following data reveals how they conducted the survey and the knowledge they learned about this problem in the school community:

Juan: Have you seen a fight in the school?

(..)

Interviewee # 2: Yes

Juan: How many fights have you seen?

- A. Any
- B. 1-3
- C. 5 or more

(...)

Interviewee # 2: más de 5

Juan: Why do you believe that fights are presented at school?

(...)

Interviewee # 2: Lo que pasa es que hay mucha intolerancia entre los estudiantes. No se aguantan nada y ante cualquier cosa reaccionan con golpes.

(...)

(Transcript 13, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

Accordingly, after analyzing the surveys done, students concluded that there were intolerance and disrespect. They ended their presentation by saying that “we must be tolerant and learn to understand or listen to people” (Field-notes 3, Project 2, Session 3, 01-06-2015)

The last problem students addressed was young pregnancy and sexual relations at early age. This project was carried out because students had a lot of concerns about sexual relations in young people. One major problem at school was that young people were curious and wanted to start their sexual life early in their lives, perhaps by the pressure of their friends or influenced by media. Although none of the girls at school were reported of being pregnant before, the purpose of this investigative topic was to create awareness of the risks of having sex at a very early age. So, this topic was more informative and educational than based on any rates of pregnancy at school. Nazly and Paula presented this topic based on the survey previously done. During the presentation, they emphasized the idea “If you want to have sex, use protection.” This fact showed how this group reflected about this problem, and they proposed one alternative to control this problem in their community. These data show how they presented the topic to the class:

Nazly: Good afternoon! We are presenting the topic on Young pregnancy

Paula: The causes of pregnancy is because people no use contraceptive methods ... we need to be responsible with sex. (Transcript 12, Project 3, Session 5, 03-08-2015)

Thanks to the topics involved in the second project, students started to develop critical thinking skills as they were more conscious about several problems at school mainly caused by their own behaviors.

When doing the third project, “Getting involved in my neighborhood students increased knowledge about the most serious problem in the neighborhood: insecurity because there were many thieves attacking people and stores all around. For instance, the group reported that vendors were afraid of thieves in the area *“she [the baker] thinks the problems in the neighborhood are the robbery,” “He [the dress maker] thinks that there are robberies,”* and *“the man in the stationary thinks that the neighborhood is with very much commerce but the security is bad”* (Field-notes 5, Project 3, Session 5, 03-08-2015).

Thus, through this final project, students detected people’s worries related to the insecurity facts in the neighborhood. They found this topic was a common perception between them because students themselves have been victims of robberies really close to school. When they were presenting their oral reports there were comments from other students like: *“todas las personas en el barrio se quejan de la inseguridad.”* This fact, allowed them to have a sense of belonging to the community, and thought of possibilities to change the situation they were living. Field notes taken during students’ oral presentations about the visit to the neighborhood, showed that students felt plenty identified with the community problems because they knew some of their classmates had been victims of armed robbery near the school.

Sebastián: ¿Si pilla? todas las personas en el barrio se quejan de la inseguridad

Karen: igual que nosotros, ¿luego no nos atracan cuando vamos saliendo? A si alguno da papaya y va solo ¿no lo tasan? ¿Pa’ver qué tiene?

(Field-notes 5, Project 3, Session 5, 03-08-2015)

As it was explained, project-based learning not only stimulated students to speak in English more often, but motivated them to recognize and increase the knowledge of the people

around them, the life stories of their classmates, and the problems of the community and the school. This finding relates to Thomas (2000) and Harris & Katz (2001), who explain that PBL involves learners in complex tasks and investigative activities, giving students the opportunity to carry out investigation topics related to learners' daily life and the environment that could engage them in integrating learning and experiential learning. This investigative process was possible with these learners despite their trials and difficulties with language production in L2, who were able to negotiate meaning and participate in classes in a more communicative experience.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter addresses the conclusions and the pedagogical implications based on this research study, whose main inquiry was to examine how eighth graders from a public school in Bogota, increased their speaking skill through project-based learning. I also share the limitations there were along the research practice.

Conclusions

The main conclusion that can be made from this study is that although PBL is not exclusively a teaching approach designed for language teaching, if implemented wisely, it can enhance EFL learners' communicative competence because students are encouraged to negotiate meaning. Speaking is one of the main communicative skills that students can best develop when working with PBL. The communicative interactions during the projects showed that with investigative topics and fieldwork related to students' life and interests, it is possible to foster EFL learners' speaking abilities. The students who did the different projects in an English class at Virginia Gutierrez de Pineda School were able enhance their communicative competence in L2 despite linguistic limitations with vocabulary knowledge, grammar use, and pronunciation.

This study showed that PBL helped students to improve mainly their lexical competence. Through this methodology, students from eighth grade consolidated some basic expressions and structures they have learnt in previous English classes and that they had forgotten in eighth grade. Students passed from using isolated words to learn and use simple sentences and utterances. They progressively improved their accuracy and fluency, although they never reached good levels of these two oral features.

Peer support was key in helping students increase their oral language competence. Peer support strategies included asking for and providing others with vocabulary or expressions needed to complete the tasks for each project; they also learnt by repeating expressions other students said. With peer support, they were able to learn the foreign language in a more social manner. As a result, learners were encouraged to make better oral productions and used English more often.

Another important conclusion is that PBL motivated students to use several interactional and transactional strategies to communicate their ideas in L2. Learners participated in small conversations with their peers or other members of the community, and spoke in English when they conducted interviews and surveys and gave simple oral reports. Thus, they consolidated discourse strategies that helped them to work on pronunciation, clarification of meaning and expressions, and they were able to hold conversations to accomplish communicative purposes.

It is important to point out that project-based learning played an important role in the EFL classroom because learners started to overcome their fear of speaking in English. Feelings of insecurity, anxiety, shyness, and discomfort for being mocked by their peers were initially present in the experience. To overcome these negative feelings, students used two strategies: 1) preparing and rehearsing their oral productions with vocabulary, pronunciation, and structures

needed to later do actual conversations and fieldwork in L2, and 2) using code-switching and translation in order to reduce high levels of anxiety and stress in oral production.

Transactional and interactional strategies were useful, too. Eighth graders usually wrote notes to support their oral production and they often read from them when they were doing oral tasks; and some of them were helped by advanced learners with language use. However, in the case of these EFL participants, it was clear that as learners were given the opportunity to practice the language, they made a good job, but they needed time to prepare their production. They put on the table their previous knowledge, they contributed to the construction of knowledge and of course, they showed their work to others. Additionally, most part of the time, learners rolled with translation and code switching because they needed to compensate failures in oral communication (lack of vocabulary and pronunciation problems), in their interactions. So, they often translated or moved between L1-L2 or between L2-L1. Therefore, the English teacher needed to be tolerant with the many times students used translation because it was a strategy learners found useful to produce language orally in L2.

Project-based learning helped students to think more on knowledge and contents or real life than just practicing the language for the sake of language itself. Throughout the pedagogical implementation, students had the opportunity to interact orally between themselves as classmates from eighth grade and with other people outside the classroom in order to gain knowledge of the world around them. In project one, they interviewed each other in order to learn more about their lifestyle, goals in life, and their own life stories. In project two, they applied a survey to question the school community about the problems they found in this institute, they made analysis of causes, consequences and possible solution of the school problems; and, in project three, they went outside the school and interacted with people from the stores around the school.

Another salient conclusion is that PBL enhanced collaborative learning and motivated students to work in groups as problem solvers. According to the findings, learners were committed to the projects as participatory leaders and problem solvers, leading them to become more responsible and more goal-oriented with the project completion because they had a meaningful purpose to fulfill. Their high levels of participation and responsibility were evident in the work they did, including the oral reports about the information they had collected in the fieldwork. This was a main achievement because learners had been lazy and indifferent with the English class before they worked with projects. Collaboration created attitudes of support, respect, and harmony. Students changed their selfish and individualistic attitudes into supportive and collaborative work by trying to complete the projects together. They valued everyone's participation in the learning process and respected their contributions to the class. For instance, when students were reporting the findings for the projects, the other students who were listening to the presenters were more respectful, receptive, and attentive to the information their classmates were reporting. In fact, values such as respecting the students who were speaking was a significant change, because before this research experience, they used to ridicule their classmates' pronunciation and intervention in L2. All these aspects are a clear evidence of how learners changed their attitude towards the English class and helped to the construction of a better learning environment through their active participation and contributions to the class.

Implications

First of all, and based on this research study, it is important to mention that PBL use in EFL context offers the teacher, the students, and the institution great benefits. It is adaptable to different students' proficiency levels and content resources; it improves positive attitudes toward learning, it involves collaboration among participants; rolls out curiosity; and, grow in self-

reliance (Thomas, 2000 and Stoller, 2006). Thus, using PBL in the EFL classroom can be a fruitful method because it transforms traditional models of education, an issue that has taken great relevance in education today. Additionally, autonomy is enhanced because participants in the learning process (teacher and students) are actively engaged by doing the projects (Skehan, 1998). Students worked more independently; they become more proactive, creative, and a little more critical in their thinking. Moreover, the activities designed aimed at fostering the development of thinking and problem solving abilities (Brown et al., 1993), a useful life skill.

A second implication is that English teachers who want to bring variety to their classrooms may improve and modify their traditional teaching methodologies through PBL. It implies to look for ways to make English an interdisciplinary subject as learners can work on different contents while learning the foreign language. Also, the teacher must work with students, guiding them and doing the fieldwork at the same time students do it.

Project-based learning, as suggested by Stoller (2006) engages learners in meaningful language learning activities, since with PBL students do scientific cycles (information gathering, processing, and reporting), that is to say, they learn the language by doing investigative work. It is difficult, exhausting, and time-consuming, but as presented in this study, eighth graders were able to do investigative projects through which they became active learners and motivated to speak English more often regardless linguistic limitations.

A personal implication is that my teaching improved through this research experience. I will surely be more attentive to my students' needs and I will try to incorporate PBL into the curriculum in future courses in order to motivate students to become problem solvers, more responsible, and over all, lead them to learn the foreign language by doing, as they engage in investigative work and negotiate meaning in L2.

Limitations

One of the limitations in this research study concerns to the fact there were a lot of data collected during the pedagogical implementation. Data from all the instruments: field notes, interviews and video or audio recordings were time consuming to be transcribed. Each of the five sessions per project had got eight transcripts, and one field- note. There were more than one hundred and fifty transcripts with the interviews' transcripts. Fortunately, Atlas-Ti software was a great aid when organizing the data. With this tool it was possible to identify and classify all the common points that finally became into categories that feed the data analysis. Another limitation with data collection was the way to take field notes; taking quick field notes was hard demanding because I was busy almost part of the time supporting students who needed my supervision.

A second limitation in this study was related to students who did not have enough vocabulary to express their ideas in English. Students' limitations were mainly connected with the fact they used to be engaged in traditional learning practices and individual work in the past. That is why at the beginning they: 1) were passive learners; they only waited for the teacher to tell them what to do, 2) had to use L1 most of the time because they had not practiced speaking much in previous classes, and 3) it was difficult to work with PBL for the first time because it required the teacher to be more tolerant, patient, and do a lot preparation to design and help students complete the projects.

The third limitation during the development of this study was concerning to the institutional policies. There are many aspects to consider before taking students out of the school. That was because it was time consuming to have the principal's authorization to go out of the school to do fieldwork. To plan the visit to the neighborhood I had to: 1) fill the format for pedagogical outputs, which required a map and logistics for the tour, 2) ask for permission to the

director and to the coordinators, 3) ask the secretary to activate the assurance policy in the case of any accident, 3) ask two of my colleges to go with us during the tour around the neighborhood, 4) ask for parents' permission to go out. After all, we did the work and there were nice results.

Another limitation was that I doing the role of a teacher and a researcher at the same time. It was difficult to separate my role as a teacher to become myself a researcher. I sometimes forgot that I needed to be observant of students' interaction instead of help learners to develop their work. I had to make a great effort because I became a personal tutor to each student or each group. When planning the projects, it was time consuming and when applying the pedagogical implementation, at the beginning, it was hard to guide students during each step for each project. Additionally, I had the role as a researcher collecting data and being a teacher at the same time. I had to observe and take notes while students did the activities.

Further research

After doing this research study, other issues could be examined. The first point in question is to explore in-depth students' fears when they have to face oral productions. Perhaps, further research could be focused on the analysis of emotional and affective outcomes when dealing with speaking in EFL contexts, especially if this skill is the least practiced in the EFL classroom. Secondly, further research is needed in regards to the influence of PBL on cooperative learning in the development of speaking skills. Although PBL involves cooperation among students (Thomas, 2000); it will be interesting to analyze how cooperation may improve students' English levels at public schools in Colombia where there are attitudes of individuality and intolerance, including violence and bullying among learners. The third aspect for further research is about the reasons why learners from other public schools find speaking a very

difficult skill. Finally, another aspect that deserves deeper consideration would be to complement the theoretical foundations for project-based learning in EFL through more empirical research in order to find more elements that consolidate PBL use in EFL here in Colombia. More research is needed to strengthen the visions of teaching and learning, and the techniques and procedures that should be implemented to incorporate this method in EFL education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Diagnosis Survey

A.1 Encuesta Diagnóstico

Edad _____ hombre _____ mujer _____

1. Conteste SI o NO a las siguientes preguntas

1. ¿Cree ud. que aprender una segunda lengua como Inglés es útil para los estudiantes del colegio?
2. ¿Ud. practica ingles dentro del salón de clases y durante la clase de inglés??
3. ¿Ud. practica ingles fuera del salón de clases y fuera de la clase de inglés?
4. ¿Ud. utiliza palabras o expresiones en inglés cuando habla informalmente con compañeros o amigos?
5. ¿Ud. comprende las explicaciones del profesor cuando las realiza en inglés?
6. ¿Ud pide explicación cuando no entiende lo que su profesor le dice en inglés?
7. ¿Ud siente que realmente está aprendiendo la segunda lengua cuando se realizan actividades en inglés?
8. ¿Cree ud. que hablar una segunda lengua puede representar un mejor futuro (laboral, académico, viajes)
9. ¿Considera ud. que integrar sus experiencias de vida o intereses podría ser útil para desarrollar un mejor nivel de lengua?

SI	NO

2. ¿Cuál o cuáles de las siguientes habilidades considera usted que ha desarrollado mejor en las clases de inglés durante su vida escolar? Más de una opción es posible.

Escribir _____ Leer _____ Escuchar _____ Hablar _____

3. Piense en algunas razones por las cuales ud. no usa el inglés en su vida cotidiana.

No le gusta el inglés

Prefiere otra lengua

Le da temor cometer errores

No le agrada interactuar con otros

Sólo le interesa aprender a escribir en inglés

Sólo le interesa aprender a leer en inglés

Podría perder su identidad como colombiano

<input type="checkbox"/>	Siente que su vocabulario es escaso	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Su proceso de aprendizaje se ha visto interrumpido en el cole	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cree que no es importante en su vida	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sus profesores no le han motivado a hablar en inglés	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO necesita usar el inglés en su comunidad o entorno	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Piensa que no es bueno para los idiomas	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	No ha estudiado ingles seriamente	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Valore las siguientes actividades que se desarrollan en la clase de inglés de acuerdo a su opinión personal. 1 es el más bajo 5 es el más alto.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Explicaciones del profesor					
2. Ver videos o películas en inglés					
3. Desarrollo de actividades de escucha (canciones, conversaciones, historias,etc)					
4. Ejercicios de escritura (descripciones, historias)					
5. Actividades de completar oraciones o párrafos					
6. Desarrollo de juegos					
Lectura de historias en revistas, libros, periódicos					
Realizar trabajo colaborativo					
Realizar trabajo individual					
Interactuar mediante diálogos o conversaciones espontáneas					
Interactuar con el professor (preguntas, respuestas)					
7. Cuando se realizan actividades de interacción oral en inglés ud cree que...					
- Es práctico para el desarrollo personal					
- Interactuar mediante dialogos es divertido					
- Solo le gusta hablaren ingles cuando interactua con el profesor					
- Teme cometer errors cuando habla en inglés					
- Se siente cómodo y confiado hablando en inglés					
- Estas dispuesto a realizar actividades orales propuestas					
- Se debe tener en cuenta sus experiencias, expectativas y necesidades					

A.2 Encuesta socio-económica

ENCUESTA SOCIO ECONOMICA

EDAD _____

- Marque con una X su respuesta por favor

HOMBRE _____ MUJER _____ ESTRATO SOCIO ECONOMICO 1 2 3 4 5 6

VIVE EN CASA _____ APTO _____

PROPIEDAD _____ FAMILIAR _____ ARRIENDO _____

NIVEL DE ESCOLARIDAD PADRE

PRIMARIA ___ BACHILLERATO ___ TECNICO ___ TECNOLOGICO ___ PROFESIONAL

NIVEL DE ESCOLARIDAD MADRE

PRIMARIA ___ BACHILLERATO ___ TECNICO ___ TECNOLOGICO ___ PROFESIONAL

OCUPACION PADRE _____ OCUPACION MADRE _____

- CON RELACION AL APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLES COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA RESPONDA POR FAVOR

-Le gusta la clase de inglés SI _____ NO _____

-Además de la clase regular de inglés, ¿tiene algún tipo de contacto con el inglés en sus actividades cotidianas dentro y fuera del colegio?

SI _____ NO _____ En caso afirmativo ¿cuáles? _____

-Considera que realmente está aprendiendo inglés con las actividades que se proponen en clase?

SI _____ NO _____

-Cuando se proponen actividades en clase de inglés, Ud. prefiere trabajar

SOLO ___ EN PAREJAS ___ EN GRUPOS _____

- ¿Cuál o cuáles de las siguientes habilidades considera usted que ha desarrollado mejor en las clases de inglés durante su vida escolar? Más de una opción es posible.

Escribir _____ Leer _____ Escuchar _____ Hablar _____

- ¿Le gustaría mejorar su nivel de expresión oral en inglés? SI _____ NO _____

- ¿Considera Ud. que integrar sus experiencias de vida o intereses podría ser útil para desarrollar un mejor nivel de lengua? SI ___ NO ___

APPENDIX B. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS
B. 1 Field notes chart (Observation)

PHASE # _____ SESSION # _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

TOPIC _____

STUDENT'S NAME _____

PROFICIENCY LEVEL: Lower-level Medium level High-level

Transcription of Students' oral production	Reflections

B. 2 Interview Format
Interview Format

INTERVIEWEE	DATE	INTERVIEWER
PURPOSE	CYCLE/PHASE	INTERVIEW No.
INSTRUCTIONS		

1. Could you tell me how did you felt when speaking in English with your classmates/teacher?
REFLECTIONS
2. What do you think about working with classmates in doing English tasks?
REFLECTIONS
3. What do you think about working with classmates on tasks that are related to personal experiences? (i. e. school problems, neighborhood characteristics)
REFLECTIONS
4. Which topics from the ones worked in the class did you like the most?
REFLECTIONS
5. Which way did speaking tasks help you improve your competence in English?
REFLECTIONS

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APPENDIX C. Consentforms C.1 Parents' consent form

Febrero de 2015.

Querido padre de familia o acudiente,

Como estudiante de Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, estoy conduciendo una investigación titulada "**PROMOTING SPEAKING SKILL IN EFL CLASSROOM THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING AND COOPERATIVE WORK**" con los estudiantes de noveno grado de la sede b en la jornada tarde del colegio. Estoy interesada en examinar el desarrollo de la habilidad de habla en inglés mediante el trabajo colaborativo y a través de tareas que tienen que ver con la cotidianidad de los y las estudiantes. Fundamentalmente, se espera obtener un mejor desarrollo de esta habilidad en los estudiantes, así como mejorar el nivel de inglés que en este momento tienen. Bajo el seguimiento de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas y con la autorización del rector del colegio, estoy solicitándole que le permita a su hijo _____ participar.

Los participantes en este estudio continuarán asistiendo y participando en sus clases de inglés normalmente, solo que algunas de ellas serán grabadas. Después, se les pedirá que describan sus opiniones, sugerencias e ideas en relación sobre cómo mejorar el aprendizaje del inglés, para ello participarán en entrevistas y discusiones en clase. Los participantes también completarán una breve encuesta sobre su percepción de la clase y del proyecto. El tiempo total para participar en el estudio será aproximadamente de tres meses y se realizará dentro del horario de clases de inglés. (No habrá pérdida de otras clases y no tendrán que asistir en horarios adicionales.)

No hay riesgos previsibles por participar en el estudio. Como agradecimiento, todos los estudiantes que participen serán recompensados con una unidad extra en la nota del último periodo.

Si así lo desea, no se utilizará el nombre del estudiante en ninguna parte del estudio, así que toda la participación será anónima. Nadie en el colegio tendrá acceso a la información recogida. Toda la información será guardada en una ubicación segura bajo llave que será accesible únicamente para la investigadora.

La participación en el estudio es totalmente voluntaria y no habrá sanciones por no participar. Sólo los estudiantes que quieran participar recibirán el formato de consentimiento. Además, los participantes están en libertad de abandonar la participación en la investigación en cualquier momento.

La maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas ha aprobado este estudio. Si tiene alguna duda sobre la investigación o dude en contactarme, docente Ady Marcela Vaca Torres en el 3203425451. Por favor dé su permiso al firmar el formato adjunto y haciendo que el estudiante me lo entreguen la próxima clase de inglés.

Atentamente,

Ady Marcela Vaca Torres

Estudiante Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Consentimiento de Participación

He leído la carta adjunta de consentimiento y estoy de acuerdo con que mi hijo participe en el estudio titulado **“PROMOTING SPEAKING SKILL IN EFL CLASSROOM THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING”**

Nombre del Estudiante

Si ___ No ___ deseo que el nombre de mi hijo/a sea utilizado.

Nombre del Padre de Familia o Acudiente

Firma y número de documento de identidad

Fecha

C.2 Student's consent form

Consentimiento estudiantes

Iniciales de los Participantes _____

Formato de consentimiento para el Estudiante-Participante

Estás siendo invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación. Estoy haciendo esto para aprender más sobre el desarrollo de habilidades de habla en la clase de inglés a través del trabajo colaborativo en la realización de tareas auténticas. Si estás de acuerdo en participar en este estudio, se te harán preguntas sobre lo que piensas de la clase de inglés y se espera que compartas tus ideas, sugerencias, y experiencias personales con tus compañeros y profesora. También será necesario que participes en algunas entrevistas y encuestas que podrían ser grabadas. Después de que esto termine, tú tendrás un mejor desempeño académico en la asignatura de inglés.

No hay riesgos previsibles por participar en el estudio. Como agradecimiento, todos los estudiantes que participen serán recompensados con una unidad extra en la nota del último periodo. Si así lo deseas, no se utilizará tu nombre en ninguna parte del estudio, así que toda la participación será anónima. Nadie en el colegio tendrá acceso a la información recogida. Toda la información será guardada en una ubicación segura bajo llave que será accesible únicamente para la investigadora.

Si estás de acuerdo con participar en el estudio, pero aún tienes cualquier duda puedes preguntar a la profesora Ady Marcela Vaca Torres quien está conduciendo este estudio. No tienes que estar obligatoriamente en el estudio, pero si decides participar, puedes dejarlo en el momento que desees.

Consentimiento del estudiante: Me han informado sobre el estudio, porqué se está haciendo y lo que tendré que hacer. También sé que no tengo que hacerlo si no quiero. Si tengo preguntas, puedo preguntarle a la profesora Ady Marcela Vaca Torres. También sé que puedo dejar la investigación en cualquier momento.

Mis padres o Acudientes saben que voy a participar en esta investigación.

POR FAVOR FIRME SI ESTÁ DE ACUERDO EN PARTICIPAR.

Firma del estudiante

Fecha

Si _____ No _____ Estoy de acuerdo con que se utilice mi nombre en el estudio.

APPENDIX D. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

D.1 Lesson Plan

CYCLE 1. PROJECT 1 (In the classroom)

Discovering who my classmates are: sharing common ideals, but respecting difference

TYPE OF PROJECT: Conducting an interview to a classmate

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: Students will interview a classmate to find out information and help him/her to reflect about his/her personality, lifestyle, his/her goals in life, and his/her role as a member of his/her family.

PROJECT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Talking about their partners' personality, lifestyle, goals in life, and role in the family, including defects and qualities.
- Asking and giving information about their partners' personality, goals in life, and the family.
- Reporting and valuing a classmate's lifestyle and individuality.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Students usually share the same space (the classroom) during the whole academic year, but many times they do not know each other very much. The purpose of this project is to establish stronger bonds and friendlier relationships among students as they start to recognize their qualities and personality. To do so, students will prepare an interview to get information about one of their classmates' personality, lifestyle, and goals in life, their role as member of their family, and what values are ingrained in their family. Students will prepare seven (7) questions. Then, they will interview a classmate. After that, they will make a written and oral report about their classmates' interview.

LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATIVE OBJECTIVES:

- Asking for and giving personal information about personality, lifestyle, and goals in life.
- Giving personal and critical opinions about one's personality, lifestyle, and goals in life.
- Using yes/no questions, wh question and review tenses as necessary to prepare and conduct the interview

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT:

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STEPS	DESCRIPTION	DATE, TIME, AND MATERIALS
<p>Step 1: Giving students examples of how to conduct an interview</p>	<p>a) Students watch a video about an interview and how to conduct one. It's a three minutes' interview at a classroom. The teacher is the interviewer and the student is the interviewee. The teacher is asking her about her daily life. He asks 13 questions such as: where do you work? Are you married? Do you have breakfast? What time do you get to London? What time do you start work? What time do you finish work? Do you have dinner with your family? What do you do after dinner?</p> <p>b) The teacher will present a ppt that includes pictures about an interview she conducted to a co- worker from school, the questions she asked and the written report she did about him.</p>	<p>Monday, May 11th 4:45 pm 1-hour class https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdBJBfcWLxw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH1xBVPzow0</p> <p>A ppt presentation as example</p>
<p>Step 2: Creating the questions to conduct the interview</p>	<p>Interviewers choose their interviewee and prepare the questions to be asked. Students have to create seven (7) preliminary questions about his/her partner and his/her family. The questions must be related to their personality, their lifestyle, their goals in life, their role as member of the family. First, students have to write the questions, and then must record themselves by asking the questions in order to practice and check pronunciation.</p> <p>While they write and prepare the questions, the teacher will review and correct the questions to make sure they are well-written and grammatically correct at the moment of conducting the interview.</p>	<p>Monday, May 14 35 min Student's portfolio, school supplies, mobile phones, camera</p> <p>Target questions to be asked in the interview: What's your personality? What do you need to improve about your personality? What's your occupation? Who do you live with? Do you have any hobbies? What do you usually do on weekends? What do you think about your future? What are your goals in life?</p>

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<p>Step 3: Rehearsing the interview</p>	<p>The interviewer rehearses the questions before conducting the interview</p>	<p>1-hour class (50 min) Student's portfolio, mobile phones, camera.</p>
<p>Step 4: conducting the interview</p>	<p>Interviewers conduct the interview. They must record their interview on their cell phones to later prepare the report.</p>	<p>Student's portfolio, mobile phones, camera.</p>
<p>Step 5: Writing a report about the interviewee's answers.</p>	<p>Interviewer writes a report about his/her classmate's answers. As reporters, they will have to report orally the following aspects: I interviewed . . . I discovered that he/she has a great personality because he/she . . . I also liked his/her lifestyle because he/she . . . However, he/she needs to improve his/her (temper because/ be more responsible because I learned about his/her family. It is a wonderful family because . . . I value this person because with this interview I realized that . . . While students write their report and practice orally the presentation on one of their classmates, the teacher will help them with correcting language use and pronunciation in both their written and oral production.</p>	<p>1-hour class Student's portfolio, school supplies, mobile phones or camera.</p>
<p>Step 6: Presenting orally a two minutes' oral report about the interview.</p>	<p>Students make a one or two minute oral report about his/her classmate's answers based on the written report they did the previous class.</p>	<p>1-hour class Written report Camera</p>

APPENDIX E

Graphic Atlas TI

